

COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE

#1343

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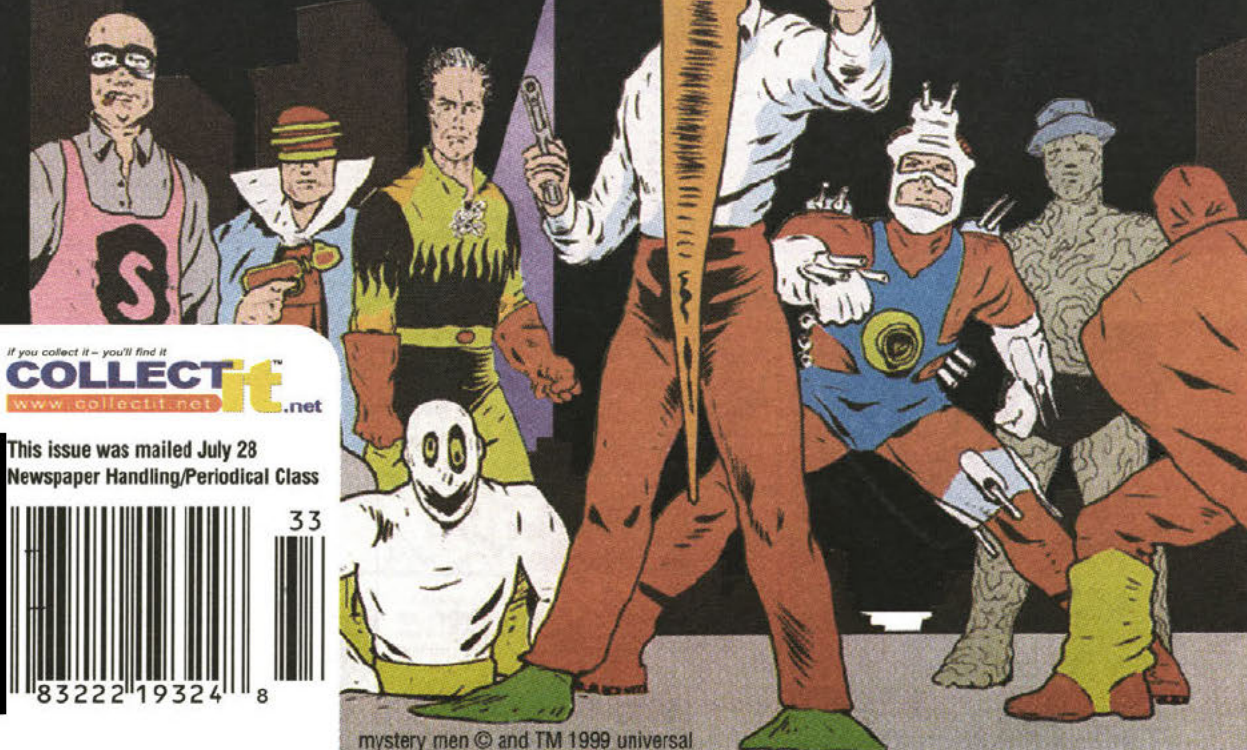
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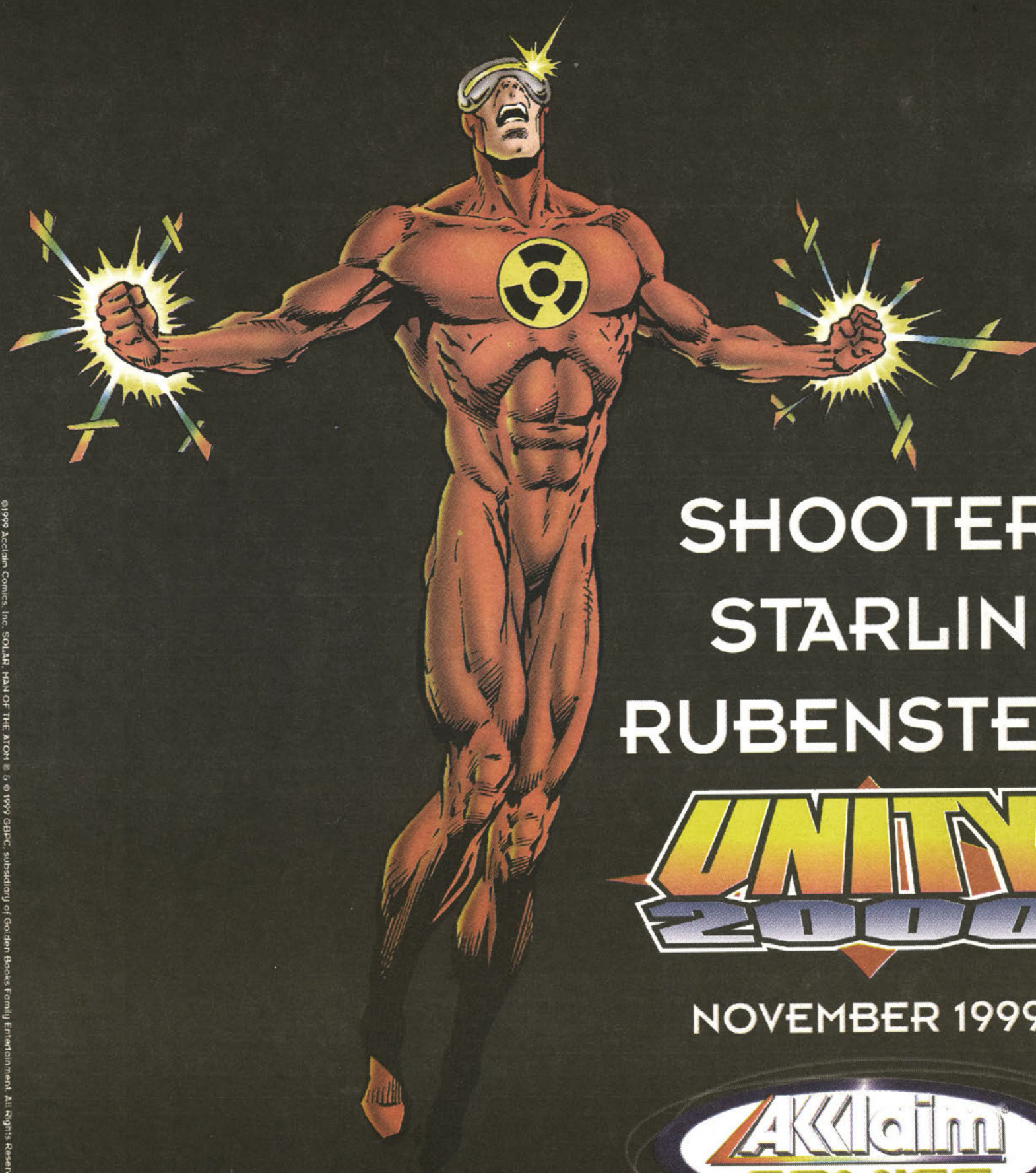
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#1343

August 13, 1999

(Vol. 29, #33)

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Voting is hard!



Editorial
by
**Maggie
Thompson**

Barbie thought *math* was hard? She never had to decide on her favorite among, say, *On Stage*, *Barnaby*, *King Aroo*, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Dilbert*, and *Calvin and Hobbes*. Or among *Uncle Scrooge*, *The Spirit*, *Captain Marvel*, *Pogo*, and *Fone Bone*. Or —

As I handed out "Comics of the Century" ballots to fans and pros at Wizard World, several started confidently to fill it out — and suddenly came to a halt. Invariably, the person would suddenly look up, frown anxiously, and say, "This is *hard*!"

You bet.

And it hit me just how grateful we should all be for the incalculable wealth of entertainment we've been privileged to enjoy — and the scope of delights our creators have brought us.

Consider one genius: Will Eisner. Do I pick him as favorite penciller? Inker? Writer? Painter?

Consider one genius: Walt Kelly. Do I pick him as favorite penciller? Inker? Writer? Painter?

Consider one genius: Carl Barks. Do I pick him as favorite penciller? Inker? Writer? Painter?

With a lot of creators, you don't have to

pick their work as your favorite to have loved it every time you saw it.

One of the booth conversations I had in Chicago focused on "The Old Castle's Secret," a Donald-and-kids-and-Scrooge story. The pro I was talking with said it was his favorite — and, suddenly, I recalled my childhood terror at reading this story of (get this, all you who are uninitiated!) an *invisible*, sword-slashing skeleton. Gee!

(To this day, I think my mother quietly removed that issue from my pile of beloved comics, perceiving how fascinated I was by the story — and how terrifying I found it.)

What's incredible about comics is that Carl Barks is only one of dozens of *auteur* types — folks who write and perform and direct and sell entertainment for the delectation of an appreciative audience.

There are, moreover, specialists. They pop into your brain when you think of the work of, say, a writer. Dave Sim is a dialogue genius. Alan Moore dissects the comics of his childhood and, instead of killing the animal, re-joins its parts to make a more beautiful living creature. There are inkers who select lines and spot blacks and fix flaws. There are colorists who have even provided entire backgrounds. There are —

And remember: We're considering our favorites from the entire span of the 1900s. We can (and should) cast our thoughts back to the 1940s and '50s, as we consider what it is we look for in *CBG* ads, at conventions, and on the Internet.

As we do this, we renew our appreciation of folks like Carl Barks, who dedicated virtually his entire comic-book career to building a magic land of ducks in which millions of kids felt truly at home.

You know, it doesn't even require filling out a ballot to say how much Carl's view of Duckburg has meant to you. Or how Eisner has affected you. Or what Kelly did. Or Jae, Jim, or Stan Lee or Frank Miller or Sergio Aragonés or Julius Schwartz or Carmine Infantino or Harvey Kurtzman or —

This week in

**COMICS
BUYER'S
GUIDE**

On the cover

Beginning with their first appearance in *Flaming Carrot* #16 (Jun 87), The Mystery Men have been frequent guest stars in Bob Burden's black-and-white series. Now the independent series' second-stringers get mainstream exposure in a film from Universal. Burden looks back at his group's creation and how they got from the printed page to the big screen.

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Plus! Check out dozens of reviews throughout the issue from our columnists, retailers, fans, and staff!



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Get reviewed!

Items for *Comics Guide* should be sent to Editor Maggie Thompson.

Items for *Faraway Looks* should be sent to Managing Editor John Jackson Miller.

For the *Anime/Manga Shelf*, send items to Associate Editor Joyce Greenholdt.

To participate in *Comics in Your Future*, contact Projects Editor Brent Frankenhoff for an invitation.

Please note: Due to the volume of material received, no review can be guaranteed.

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AUGUST ISSUE
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August brings the hottest days of summer...and your chance to order the latest and greatest comics in the pages of *PREVIEWS*! On the front cover: Victory is theirs! Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale reunite for DC's *Batman: Dark Victory*! Around back: Forces collide, as Image and Top Cow go wild with *Witchblade/Darkness*!

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PREMIER

Ten years later, Neil Gaiman returns to the Lord of Dreams, with a Vertigo hardcover graphic novel Morpheus fans can't do without – *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*!

Also:

- Peter David makes his Dark Horse debut with the astonishing *SpyBoy*!
- Todd McFarlane and Image Comics make the darkness come alive in *Spawn: Blood and Salvation*!
- John Byrne reveals secrets of the X-Men's past in Marvel's *X-Men: The Hidden Years*!
- Wizard #99 gives you the scoop on the Dark Knight, with a look at Alex Ross and Paul Dini's latest collaboration – *Batman: War on Crime*! Plus, meet Ray Park, the man behind *Darth Maul*!

COMICS

Caught between Heaven and Hell! As Armageddon threatens to destroy the Chaos! universe, the Diva of Destruction pursues her own agenda in *Lady Death: Judgement War #11*

Also:

- The *Armorines* are back, as *Acclaim's* newest title re-introduces some old heroes...and some familiar-looking aliens!
- Gotta have it! *Stone Cold Steve Austin* gets his own comic, courtesy of *Chaos! Comics*!
- Just in time for Halloween, *Sirius* presents Jill Thompson's *Scary Godmother: Mystery Date HC*! Who is the Scary Godmother's secret admirer? Find out...if you dare!

MAGAZINES

It's Wicked! *Wicked Magazine*, that is! Don't miss the debut of the new quarterly mag devoted to horror in all its delightfully hideous shapes and forms!

Also:

- You've seen the Phantom Menace...now get the first scoop on *Star Wars Episode II*, in the pages of *Star Wars Insider #46*!

GAMES

Hang out in Superman's hometown! *West End Games* presents the latest supplement to the DC Universe RPG: the *Metropolis Travel Guide*!

MERCHANDISE

Diamond Select unveils the 12" *Chastity Figure* from *Eternal Toys*!

Also:

- Only in *PREVIEWS*–*Marvel History Modern Age Action Figures*, featuring Wolverine as drawn by Frank Miller, Black Bolt by Jae Lee, and more!
- *PREVIEWS Exclusive!* *JLA Classics Gift Set #3* is here, with Superman, Zauriel, Martian Manhunter, and exclusive Lex Luthor and Joker figures!

FEATURES

A special interview with *Steven Grant*, as he reveals his plans for the *Stone Cold Steve Austin* mini-series from *Chaos*!

Also:

- Game designer *Mike Selinker* talks about reinventing the universe for the *Marvel Super-Heroes Adventure Game*! 'Nuff said!

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Tales of the disappearing *Elseworlds*

By Matt Brady

It was supposed to hit stores June 30, but there's a growing chance U.S. comics fans will never see it.

DC's *Elseworlds 80-Page Giant* featured amusing stories about alternate realities by the likes of Tom Peyer, Chuck Dixon, D. Curtis Johnson, Ariel Olivetti, Aaron Lopresti, and Ty Templeton.

The problem with the special arose, however, when DC Executive Vice President and Publisher Paul Levitz saw the story "Letitia Lerner: Superman's Babysitter" written by Elizabeth Glass and Kyle Baker and illustrated by Baker.

The story, which showed the perils of baby-sitting a su-

per-powered tot, was deemed by Levitz to contain potentially imitable behavior.

This included baby Superman crawling into a microwave and the baby-sitter accidentally turning it on and the baby sleeping in traffic, being under a falling boulder, chewing on an electrical cord, and lifting a cow and drinking directly from its teat.

Upon seeing the story, Levitz exercised his prerogative as executive vice president and publisher and had the entire U.S. print run, approximately 26,000 copies of the \$4.95 comic book, shredded before they shipped to retailers.

According to Levitz, the issues of the special were destroyed because the story in question wasn't up to DC's standards. "We went with a product that turned out not to be up to our standards when we took a second look at it, so we pulled it," Levitz said.

"We're in the process of taking another look at the story, and we may end up restacking the deck on the special. We're having conversations with Kyle about making some changes that we'd want made to print the story eventually, but they wouldn't be anything massive."

Levitz said that the material in the special was not necessarily a Comics Code issue, which explained why the issue had been approved by Project Editor Dan Raspler, DC Universe Editor Mike Carlin, and the Comics Code before going to the printer.

"The Comics Code looks for what matches the Comics Code," Levitz said. "We don't absolve ourselves of having an editorial point of view because we subscribe to that organization. We believe that everything we publish can be something that we can stand behind. This was a situation where it wasn't."

Levitz also denied that pulling the issue was related to the heightened scrutiny of the media following the events at Columbine earlier this year. "If this special had come out a year ago, I'd hope we would've made the same decision we did this year," he said.

While Levitz made his decision in time to shred the U.S. print run of the special, the shipment to Great Britain of the *80-Page Giant*, estimated to be about 1,700 copies, had already shipped.

Copies quickly disappeared from shops in London and Dublin and are now fetching prices between \$20 and \$45 at Internet auction sites.

Pages of Baker's story have been making the rounds on the World Wide Web.

Some fans who have seen it said it has an "animated" look and feel — with a level of offensiveness and likelihood of inciting violence similar to many Warner Brothers cartoons.



British buyers posted this material (© 1999 DC Comics) on the Web.

Peter Cuneo becomes Marvel President, CEO

Marvel Enterprises Inc. announced July 20 the appointment of Peter Cuneo as president and chief executive officer of the Company. Cuneo replaced Eric Ellenbogen, who resigned from the company "to head a media investment concern," according to the press release.

Marvel Chairman of the Board Morton Handel said, "Peter's 25 years of management and administrative experience in a broad range of consumer businesses with strong brand identities makes him uniquely suited to build on the company's existing creative talent and to ensure continued growth. I look forward to his leadership."

Cuneo said, "This is an exciting opportunity to further develop Marvel's creative capital. I expect to continue the recent growth of Marvel's publishing and licensing businesses. At the same time, I look forward to expanding the opportunities available to Marvel from the entertainment projects currently in progress, such as The X-Men and Spider-Man."

Cuneo was CEO of Remington Products, a manufacturer and marketer of personal care appliances; president of the Security Hardware Group of Black and Decker Corporation; and, as president of Clairol's Personal Care Division, a senior executive at Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.

Cuneo holds an MBA from the Harvard Graduate School of Business and received his undergraduate degree from Alfred University, where he is a member of the board of trustees.

Commenting on Ellenbogen's departure, Handel said, "Eric joined Marvel at a critical time, just as the Company emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. He assembled an outstanding management team, successfully completed a \$250 million long-term financing, and arranged a three-year \$60 million working capital facility. He also helped launch the Spider-Man filmed entertainment franchise with Sony Pictures Entertainment, resolving years of litigation over the company's best-known property. We thank him for his considerable contributions to Marvel."

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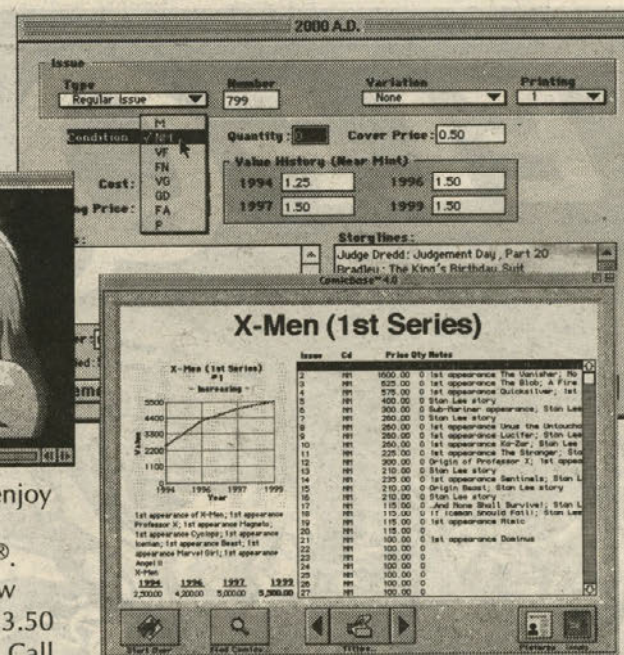
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Long-time artist Sal Trapani dies

By Jim Gauthier

Sal Trapani was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., April 30, 1927, and attended public schools, focusing on art. He graduated in 1945 and was drafted for a tour of duty in the Air Force. He served two years in the medical department and was honorably discharged in April 1947.

That same month he enrolled in the Cartoonists & Illustrators School under the G.I. Bill and he attended the school for two years. Then, freelancing by day, he enrolled for an additional two years at night. After graduating following the four years of training, he was hired by the S.M. Iger Studio: an art service to comics publishers. He worked there till May 1953.

His other credits include work for American Comics Group, Archie, Charlton, Comico, Classics Illustrated, Dell, DC, Eclipse, Gold Key, Grosset & Dunlap, King Features, Marvel, Warren Publishing, West End Games, and Whitman Publishing Co.

In 1961, he was hired by Cambria Productions in Hollywood as an assistant art director on the *Clutch Cargo* TV show. A later cartoon was the early science-fiction series *Space Angel*. He was promoted to art director two years later, till the end of the series in 1965. Leaving Los Angeles, he returned home to Connecticut to resume freelancing.



From 1965 to 1980 he became one of the busiest artists in the industry, juggling six accounts at once. His work for Marvel in the '70s and '80s included *Ghost Rider* and *Man-Thing*. And his favorite title to work on for DC was *Metamorpho* during the original run of the series. In 1980 he was hired to ink the *Superman* daily newspaper strip, which had a worldwide syndication of 600 papers until it ceased publication in 1985.

He was a co-founder of a group of professional actors — Renaissance Radio Productions — as well as the Renaissance Radio Theatre, which recreated old-time radio shows. He produced 75 radio programs and a two-hour PBS television documentary.

In 1971 he founded S.A.V.E. (Society of American Vintage-Radio Enthusiasts Inc.), one of the first old-time Radio Conventions in the country. Brett Mor-

ison, one of the actors who performed *The Shadow*, was the first guest. He ran the con for many years, with attendance at the conventions growing yearly. He acquired a massive collection of more than 50,000 old-time radio programs.

He was also an active member of the Sons of the Desert, a Laurel and Hardy appreciation society.

One of the last projects he was working on was a unproduced comic-book series based on a character he had created.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Angela (Vigilio) Trapani; his son, Frederick Trapani; his brother, Vincent; three grandchildren; and several aunts and nephews. Services were held at the Spinelli-Malerba Funeral Home in Bristol, Conn. The family asked that contributions be made to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation.

Quebecor to acquire World Color

The July 19 issue of *Publishers Weekly* reported Quebecor Printing has announced it will acquire World Color Press for \$1.4 billion in cash and stock. The acquisition also includes World Color's \$1.3 billion of debt.

The new company will be called Quebecor World Inc. and will be the world's largest commercial printer with an estimated total revenue of more than \$6.2 billion.

The merger doubles Quebecor's U.S. sales, which include comics printing for a number of publishers, including DC, Image, and Marvel.

The two companies currently have a combined total of 44,000 employees. Some layoffs are expected.

Decipher announces FASA purchase

Decipher Inc. of Norfolk, Va., and FASA Corporation of Chicago, Ill., jointly announced July 23 that they have signed a letter of intent for Decipher to acquire FASA and its subsidiary, Ral Partha. The purchase is expected to be complete within 60 days.

Decipher manufactures the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Wars* trading-card games. FASA is best known for its line of such role-playing and strategic games as *Shadowrun* and *BattleTech*, and Ral Partha manufactures metal miniature figures.

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By Brent Frankenhoff

Wizard World '99, held July 16-18 at the Rosemont Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill., attracted more than 20,000 fans to its halls. Among the larger draws were signings by filmmaker and comics writer Kevin Smith and professional wrestler Nash, whose self-titled comic book is scheduled to ship from Image later this year.

Charitable contributions. The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund demolished its previous record for contributions at a Chicago comics convention by raising \$17,800 at this year's show. Executive Director Chris Oarr said, "To lend a bit of perspective, last year we set a record for Chicago with \$6,800. Wizard was phenomenal to work with and they put on a great show. We're especially grateful to George Pérez, CBLDF board member Frank Miller, Chris Weithers and Sean Spurlock of Graham Crackers Comics, and Jim Mortenson of Comics Revolution."

The CBLDF membership drive also add-

ed 125 members at the show.

Signing events by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley, sponsored by Dark Horse, raised more than \$2,000 for the fund, while Pérez and colorist Tom Smith's sketches at the CBLDF booth raised approximately \$3,000. The *Avengers* art team was joined by *Avengers* writer Kurt Busiek, who raised an additional \$500.

In addition to sponsoring the Miller-Varley signings, Dark Horse paid for the members-only reception, the first in the fund's history, Saturday night, and loaned members of its staff to help out at the CBLDF booth.

Oarr added, "Weithers and Spurlock raised \$2,200 at their Graham Crackers branch through the sale of promotional items that most retailers receive on a weekly basis. They presented a check at the members-only reception Saturday night." In addition, the Chaos crew raised more than \$3,000 through its fan party auction.

Dealer doings. Dealers reported brisk business throughout the show, with Human Computing's Peter Bickford, for example, selling out of copies of *ComicBase* on Saturday but continuing to take orders for the product on Sunday. "This was a bargain-hunter's show," he said. "I found deals on Silver Age comics and saw interest in Golden Age comics, as well."

John Verzyl of Comic Heaven said the

crowds led to a really strong show for his booth. "Timelys sold the best," he said. "We love the Chicago people; they're very friendly. We've had such a good show here, I can't wait for San Diego."



Dark Adventure's Lon Webb also reported good sales. Among his Golden Age highlights were a sale of *All-Flash* (#28-30) as well as sales of *Golden Age Flash*. Several attendees asked for pulp magazines, as well, a phenomenon that hadn't been as prevalent in the past several years. Webb said his sales of high-grade Marvel memorabilia was excellent, with black light posters going for \$50-\$300 and Marvel Mania posters selling for \$175-\$400. In his other sales, he said, "Merry Marvel Marching Society items were also hot, there's been a resurgence in under-grounds, and we had a lot of requests for material by creators who were signing at this show." Horror comics from the '50s and liquidation items from Kitchen Sink Press were also among his sales.

Easthampton, Mass., dealer Gary Dolgoff said he had "very decent" Golden Age sales, as well as sales of pulps, original art, and Kitchen Sink Press items. "My regular table stock sold below par," he added, "but my \$5 Warren maga-



Dolgoff



At their signings, Lynn Varley and Frank Miller raised more than \$2,000 for the CBLDF.

zines sold well. We had lots of action in the low- to mid-grade items, and my stand-out item was a *Daring Mystery* #1."

Motor City Comics' Michael Goldman, who had material spread out along five booths at the show, said that his sales were OK: "about the same as last year, which was very good. We sold a little bit of everything."

Goldman's sales including a Fine-Very Fine copy of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 for \$4,000 and *Cerebus* #3 and #4 for five times guide prices. New additions to the North-

(Continues on Page 12)



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Tonight I'm going to the Premier of one of the biggest Hollywood Movies ever made from a comic book - my comic book.

I want to thank this wild, crazy, wonderful industry - each and every one of you, from Mike Richardson (who believed in Mystery Men even when I had lost hope) down to the kid who bought his first comic today.

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I want to thank the publishers who put their pocketbooks where their hearts were, who gave guys like me a shot and should probably have their heads examined.

I want to thank all the readers that turn the pages, all the creators who accepted even me as an equal with a smile & good will, the convention people who keep us alive with all those wonderful shows, the comic press (who actually take us seriously) and the editors who scratch their heads at the spelling errors in the wee hours.

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 MERCHANDISE
 REPORT

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 C.C. Beck created Captain Marvel.

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David's day dawns again. Peter David is quickly returning to the role of one of comics' busiest men with two announcements regarding his upcoming workload.

First, David will write *Spyboy* for Dark Horse; it's a new ongoing series that begins in October. Focusing on Alex Fleming, a 15-year-old superspy in a line of superspies, the series was "covertly promoted," according to a source at Dark Horse comics, via the spyboy.net website. From the site, visitors could read the fictional adventures of Fleming as well as letters he had written to comics titles, some of which saw print in recent months. **Pop Mahn** will pencil the series.

David's second new project is the new, ongoing Marvel series that will spin off from *Avengers Forever* this fall. The title, according to Editor **Tom Brevoort**, won't be revealed until just prior to the

series' release, since it provides a clue about the ending of *Avengers Forever*. Penciller **CrissCross** will provide the art for the new series. The project will be David's first published Marvel work since he left *The Incredible Hulk* in 1998.

"I can't get too in depth as to why I approached each of them for this assignment without revealing what the series is going to be," Brevoort said. "But Peter certainly has a long and varied history behind him as a writer working in the Marvel universe, and I thought it was a shame that he wasn't doing any regular work for us at the moment."

"I had heard through Bobbie Chase that he was interested in adding another title to his overall workload at one point. So, when the specifics of the spin-off came together, and I realized that it might be something he was interested in doing, I gave him a call. And CrissCross was doing sharp, underrated work on *Slingers*, which had just been canceled when we were finalizing the art assignment, and I think he'll bring a sleek, modernistic look to the series in keeping with the style that **Carlos Pacheco** brought to *Avengers Forever*, without being a slavish imitation of it."

When asked about the possibility of Rick Jones as a candidate for the ongoing series, since David has a long history with the character as well as Jones' involvement in *Avengers Forever*, Brevoort responded with a mantra common to edi-

tors. "Wait and see," he said. "Since we're only two-thirds of the way through *Avengers Forever*, and since this new series spins out of its conclusion, I'm reluctant to reveal anything that'll spoil that ending for readers. All will be made clear in time."



Ra's menaces the Justice League. Expect Ra's al Ghul to be the first villain **Mark**

Waid puts up against his *JLA*, once the writer takes over the monthly title's reins following the exit of **Grant Morrison**.

Waid's first story arc will also serve as **Howard Porter** and **John Dell's** last, since the art team is departing to pursue other *JLA*-related projects. "I'm thrilled that Howard, John, and I will be working together on at least the first story arc and hope fervently that they can free themselves up for more *JLA* projects in the future," said Waid. "They're a team I'll work with anywhere at any time."

Joining Waid as the series' regular art team following Porter and Dell's exit will be *The Authority's* team of **Bryan Hitch** and **Paul Neary**, who, according to a spokesperson for DC will leave that *WildStorm* series after #12. Though no replacements have been made, according to the spokesperson, the **Warren Ellis**-written series will continue into a second year.

WIZARD WORLD (From Page 10)

land Collection, a Michigan Silver Age hoard that Goldman has been acquiring in pieces over the past several years, were displayed at the show and sold well. The original owner of the collection bought nearly everything DC, Gold Key, Marvel, and other publishers had produced from 1958 to 1972. "The material after 1962 is almost all in Near Mint condition," Goldman said. Other items on display at the Motor City booth included a wide selection of comics collections published by Fireside in the 1970s, many of which Goldman said he had acquired at this year's Heroes Con.

At his first convention as a partner in Metropolis Collectibles, Vincent Zurzolo Jr., formerly of Vincent's Collectibles, said that the interest in the newly formed partnership and its warehouse of titles by collectors was "very, very high, especially for key issues."

There was considerable interest in pedigreed material in all grades, and Zurzolo reported sales of early Silver Age DC key issues in high grade. One of Metropolis' top sales at the show was a Very Fine+ copy of *Adventure Comics* #73, the first appearance of the second Manhunter, for \$13,000. Among more modern comics, a Near Mint copy of *Marvel Team-Up* #1 sold for \$140. "This year's attendance was great," he added, "better than last year." With his tongue firmly planted in his cheek, Zurzolo said it was a shame that he didn't have any Golden Age *Pokémon* comics for sale.

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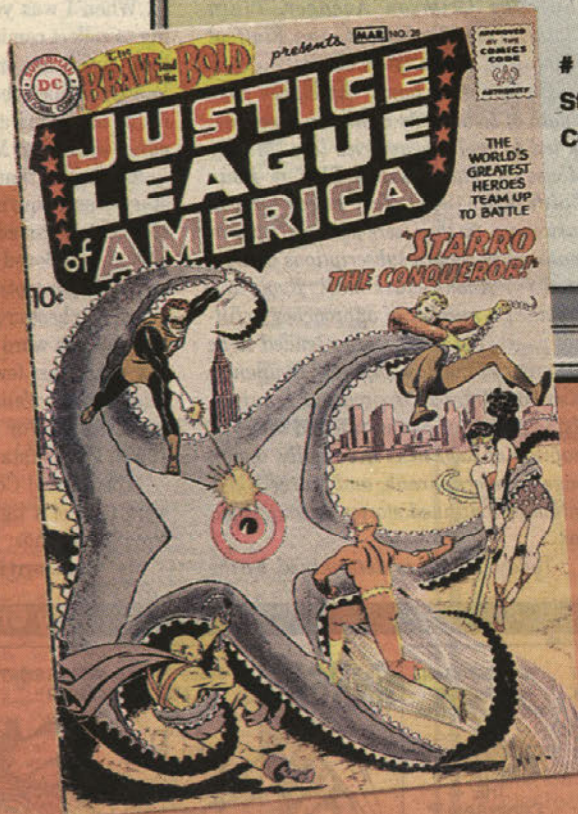
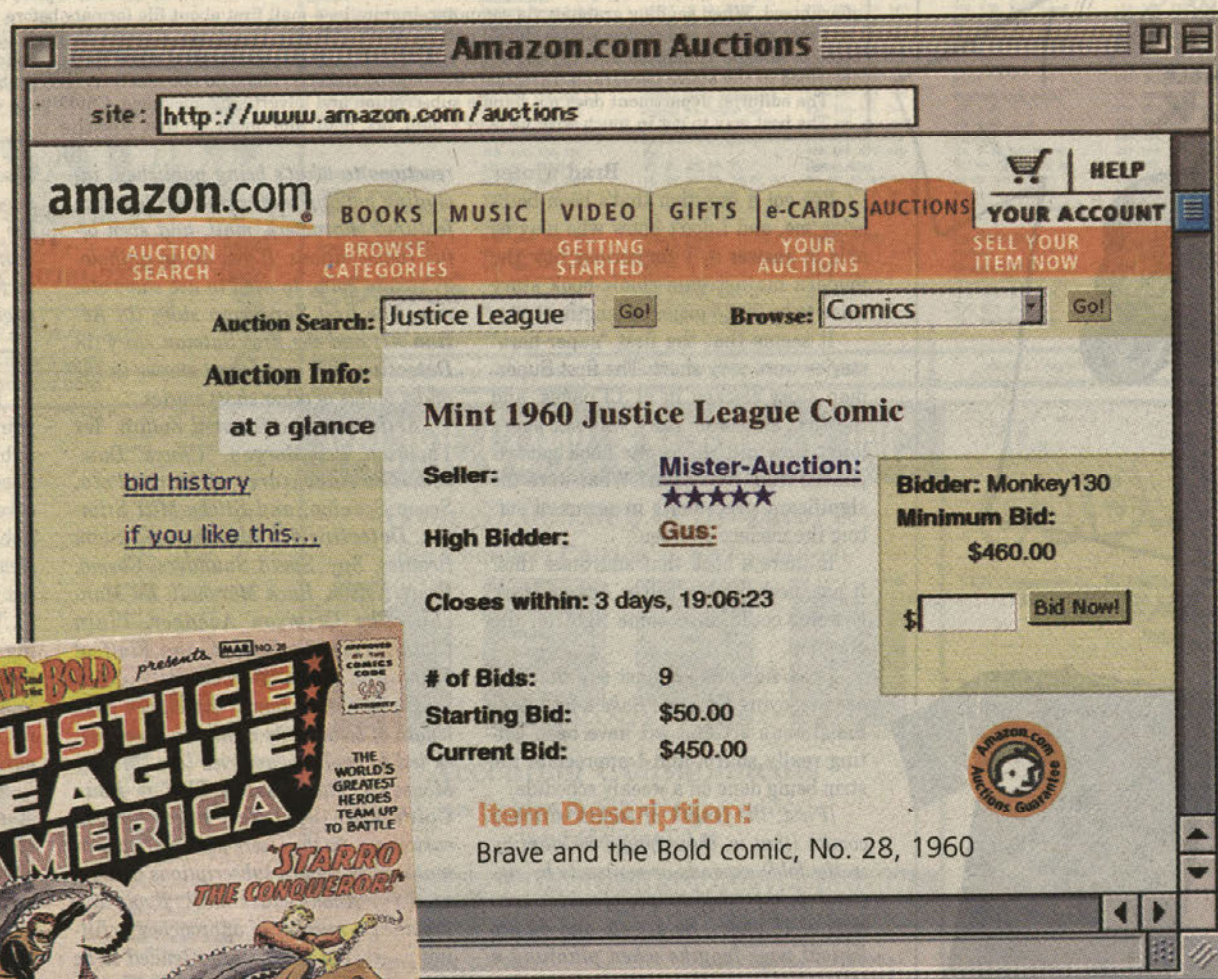


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Brad Winter

I've got a question that's been bothering me, and I don't know who may be able to answer it. I am curious how the modern mainstream comic-book story came to be 20-23 pages in length.

It seems that the first "super-hero" stories were very short: The first Superman story clocked in at 13 pages, and the first Bat-Man story was six pages long. How did the comic book get expanded from that point? What were the significant precedents in terms of setting the modern average?

Is there a book that addresses this? If not, perhaps Mr. Silver Age or Mark Evanier could shed some light on the question.

On a side note, I must say that I've been enjoying *For Art's Sake* a lot lately. Smigliano's art and wit have been getting really sharp, and I appreciate the strip being done on a weekly schedule.

[First, the length of saddle-stitched comics (that is, those bound by stapling in the fold) expands or contracts by signatures, the most simple of which consists of 16 pages. So 32, 48, and 64 are logical page lengths when planning a comic book's configuration. But other sizes are possible, always keeping in mind that publishers have to go up by fours.

When comics began, paper was cheap, and publishers were doing a lot of experimentation. One way to experiment is to publish anthologies and get

reactions to what's being published, including judging sales responses to cover-featured characters, mail, and even office conversations. If you do an anthology, you're going to need to use short stories. The first Superman story (in **Action** #1) and the first Batman story (in **Defective** #27) were short stories in the midst of lots of other short stories.

Action #1 also featured Zatara, Tex Thomson, Pep Morgan, "Chuck" Dawson, The Adventures of Marco Polo, Scoop Scanlon, and Sticky-Mitt Stimson. **Detective** #27 also featured Slam Bradley, Spy, Speed Saunders, Cosmo, Bruce Nelson, Buck Marshall, Fu Manchu, The Crimson Avenger, Plain Clothes Pete, Tenderfoot, and Flatfoot Flannigan. Result: short stories.

On the other hand, the bigger page length of some early comics in some cases led to cool megastories like "Mickey Mouse vs. The Phantom Blot" in **Four Color** #16 (1941). Text pages became customary, as they were used as required material in comics subscriptions distributed via second-class mail. Evolution provided a number of approaches to filling pages, but short stories tended to be the order of the day. Different companies also had different approaches to advertising which, of course, affected the profitability of each title. Eventually, again, page numbers shrank, and Marvel's evolution of continued stories became popular.

Today, length is determined by the

basic cost of the print job, the number of pages deemed appropriate for text, and the number of ads sold. On the other hand, sometimes pages are simply inserted to fill out issue length for story pages the creator didn't provide.]

Bernard Quesada

First, I'd like to compliment you and your staff on another successful year publishing **CBG**. I feel the difference between your publication and most others covering the comic-book profession and hobby is the difference between *The New York Times* and *People*. I know I'm not the only fan who appreciates it.

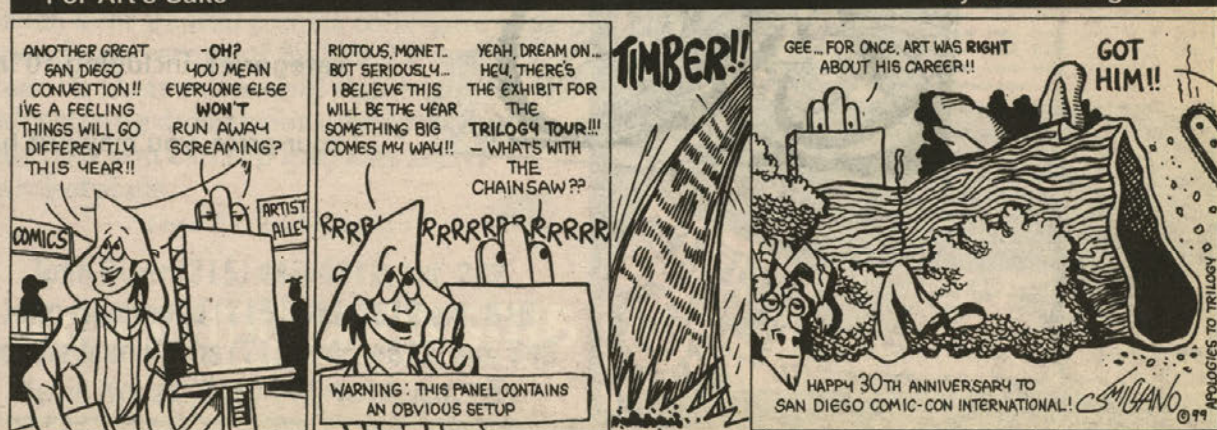
When I was younger and just starting to collect comics, I'd read stories of a local guy (I am originally from Western Pennsylvania) who started writing comics in his teens and was currently the editor in chief at Marvel Comics.

Of course, that was Jim Shooter. His story was inspiring to me and anyone else who dreamed of writing comics, or who simply loved comics. Regardless of anyone's perception of him, Shooter is one of the best creative minds in comics today. When word was verified of the rumor of the last few weeks that he would return to the Valiant characters he resurrected and/or created in the early 1990s, I was ecstatic.

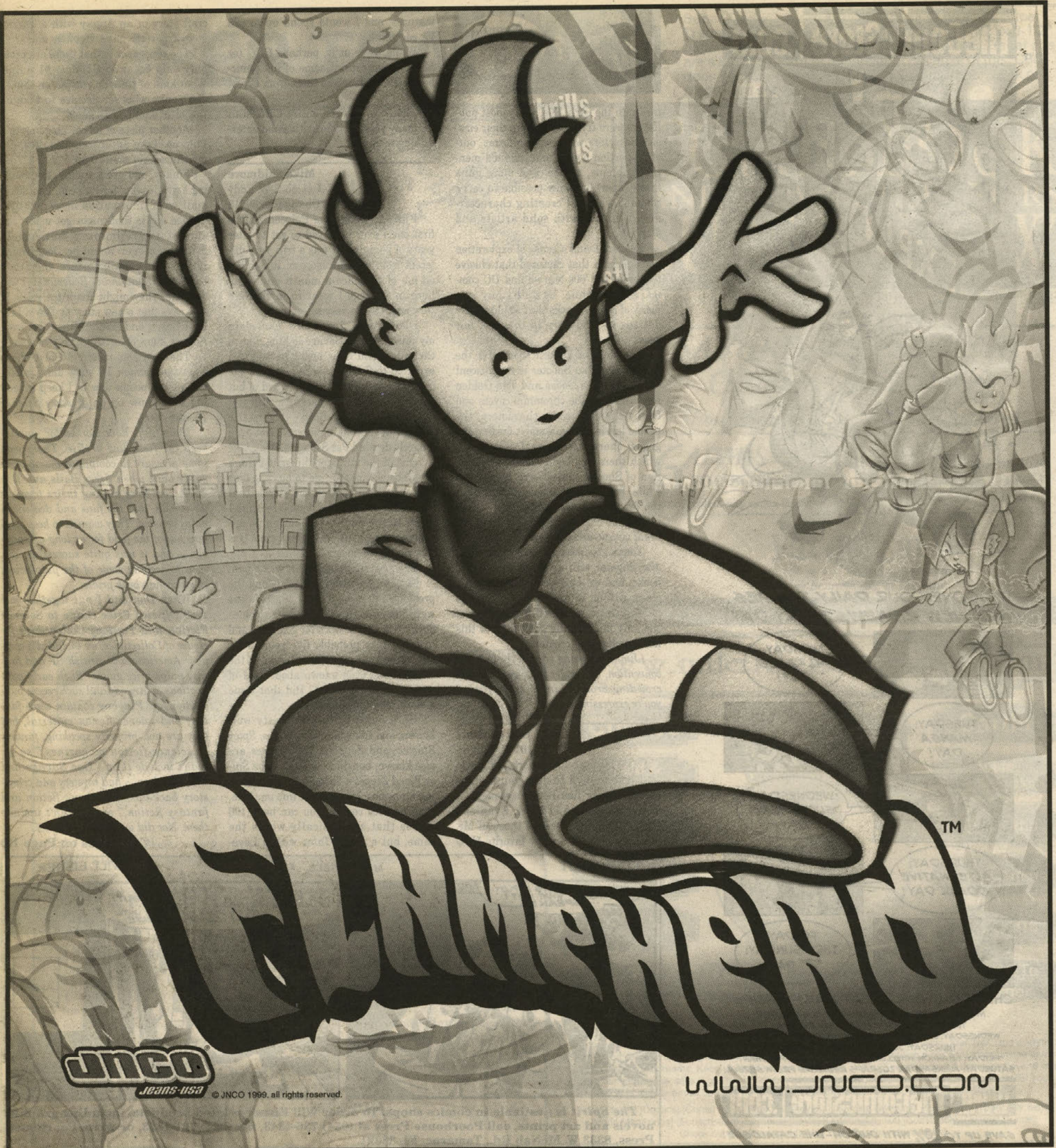
The Marvel Comics he presided over were part of a tightly structured, story-friendly mythos. Perhaps more impor-

(Continues on Page 16)

For Art's Sake



By Chris Smigiliano



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Oh, So?

From
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tantly, in the early '90s, when most publishers were trying to revamp their classic characters with new uniforms, out-of-proportion bodies, unexplained mental problems, clones, and more guns than (super) humanly possible to carry, Shooter was still creating character-driven stories with solid artists and staff.

Readers found a sense of exploration and suspense that captured that elusive feeling of the '60s Marvel and DC comics. All the while, he didn't buy into many of the gimmicks that would nearly destroy the industry in the next few years.

The story of Valiant soon after the departure of Jim Shooter is reminiscent of Aesop's "The Goose and The Golden Egg": With all the chromium covers and flashy changes to the characters, the people left in charge weren't feeding the goose; there was no real substance, which there had been under the direction of Shooter. Sales were great for a while, but the actual stories that built the foundation were forgotten — and, ultimately, beat the life out of fresh, vibrant characterization and plot.

Thank goodness we have writers like Jim Shooter still involved with comic books, and we have companies like Acclaim willing to give him a chance to pick up where he left off. I hope I'm not the only fan wishing good luck to this noble and valiant creator.

[Jim was looking good at the Chicago convention, and eager fans were already crowding around him to express what you're expressing.]

Steven Shatz
101 W. 78th St.
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I just wanted to drop you a quick note seconding Tom Takach's request for a reprint volume of Mark Evanier's CBG columns as well as those of Mr. Silver Age. These are my favorite CBG

features, and I would spend up to \$25 for each book.

While we're at it, perhaps CBG (or Mark) could reprint some of his comic-book columns, such as those from *Crossfire*.

Thank you to the entire CBG staff for many years of informative and entertaining reading.

Mike Skidmore

3631 W. Eddy
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I just got back from Pulpcon 28, the first one I ever managed to get to after years of planning. It was a trip, very different from the Chicago con. It reminded me of the once-a-month mini-cons here in Chicago I went to in the late '70s: small and a very select group.

Didn't really find a lot I wanted: In my universe, Doc Savage is king, but in the pulp world he is just a part of it. I expected to find everything Doc, all the obscure movie items I have heard of but never seen, the paperbacks I'm still trying to replace after a flood — and no Doc Savage model walking around! Not even a barely dressed Pat Savage.

One of the stranger things I think it will be cheaper for me to buy the four Doc pulps that contain the stories that are in the two Bantam double reprints I need, so the 50-60 year old pulps are cheaper than a 10-year-old reprint! Has the world gone insane?

The most interesting part was a panel discussing a pulp price guide and the problems involving it. A lot of good ideas were tossed around, but what it comes down to is a lot of work for someone, and it would take probably five years after one comes out to fine-tune it. A lot of the basics aren't even known about a lot of titles. When did it end? Did that issue #38 actually get published?

Hero pulps history is pretty well known, and titles like *Weird Tales*, *Spicy Stories*, and *Zeppelin Adventures* are also known, but the odd ones — the *Spicy Weird Zeppelin Tales* — are just waiting for someone to compile info on them. And, as with comics, you can have 100 issues that are basically worth the same, but a *Weird Tales* with a Love-

craft story or an *Argosy* with a Tarzan story are worth more. But *how* much?

The consensus is that there are probably only 50 or so *Shadow* #1 pulps. What kind of price do you put on that? I don't envy whoever decides to take on the job of a pulp price guide.

Another piece of advice on going to a Pulpcon: Take antihistamines. Boy, did my sinuses get messed up.

Finally, and great timing, the morning I was leaving for Pulpcon, I got an e-mail with information on a new Doc Savage movie that might get made. I'm sure it is preliminary, but Arnold Schwarzenegger would be Doc, Chuck Russell (*Eraser*) will produce, and Frank Darabont (*Shawshank Redemption*) will direct, or they might share the roles. It also says that a new story by David Leslie Johnson and Brett Hill will be used. Anyone know of anything they've done?

The first Doc movie did just about what the *Batman* TV show did. Luckily, not a lot of people saw it. I keep expecting it to show up on *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.

[Pulp buffs have worked for years to keep the field low-profile. There was some pressure to compile a major price guide back when Jerry Bails and Bob Overstreet were putting theirs together for comics, and the fans and dealers in pulps resisted. They wanted to keep non-fans out of the field for as long as possible — and it was quite successful. Yes, even to keeping some of the pulp prices cheaper than book prices.]

When Don and I put together our 1989 *Official Price Guide to Science Fiction and Fantasy Collectibles* for House of Collectibles, we included a complete American and British SF and fantasy pulps price guide. "Such early publications as *Argosy* and such recent publications as *Playboy* contain some fantasy and science-fiction material, but they are not, properly speaking, fantasy or science-fiction magazines," so we didn't include them. "*Doc Savage* and *The Shadow*... had mystery and crime-story back-ups, not science fiction and fantasy fiction," so we didn't include them. Nor did we include fanzines.

(Continues on Page 18)

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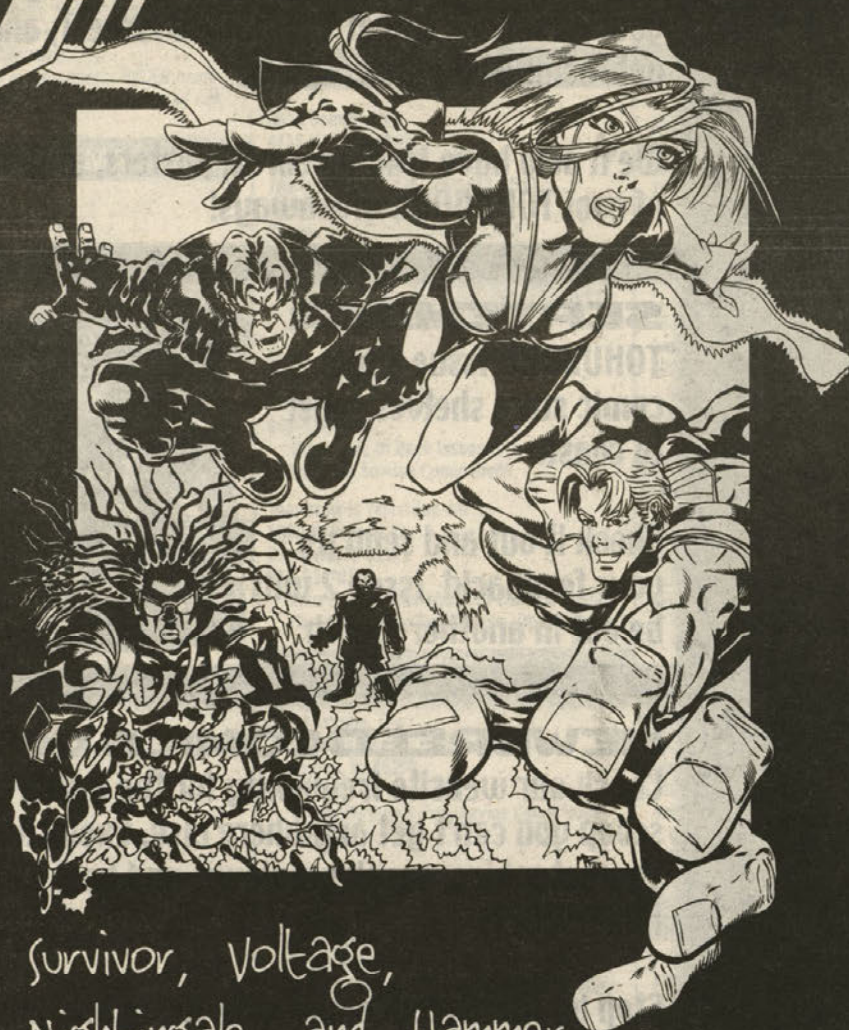
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Oh, So?

From
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We did list *Weird Tales*. At that point (a decade ago, remember), the first issue (Mar 23) was \$600 in Good; in Mint, it'd have been \$2,400. The Good price for Aug 28 (Tennessee Williams' first published story) was \$50. Issues with covers by Margaret Brundage brought a \$5 premium.]

Karl Wilcox

628 Morningside Dr.
Chester, SC 29706

I agree with your response in *CBG* #1337 in regard to Dell and Gold Key comics. It is a pity that they did not (for the most part) publish writer or artist credits. Since a large portion of my collection consists of these comics, I've spent decades trying to gather as much of this information as possible, from various sources.

For what it's worth, here are some of my findings, if they are of any assistance:

Among the "funny animal/humor" artists, Carl Barks and John Stanley certainly deserve all the admiration that they have received. However, I think that other artists of this genre are long overdue some recognition.

My favorite such artists include Harvey Eisenberg (*Tom & Jerry*, *Huckleberry Hound*, *Ruff & Reddy*, *Quick Draw McGraw*, *The Flintstones*, *The Reluctant Dragon*, "Mickey and the Beanstalk") and Al Hubbard (*Dumbo*, *Peter Pan*, *101 Dalmatians*, *Lady and the Tramp*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Aristocats*, *Jungle Book*).

Other artists who have contributed to this field include:

- Pete Alvarado (*Gay Purr-ee*, *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Sword in the Stone*, "The Rescuers" in *Walt Disney Showcase* #40, *The Secret of NIMH*, and "The Three Stooges Go around the World in a Daze" in *The Three Stooges* #15)
- Phil DeLara (*Tom & Jerry*, *Tweety & Sylvester*, *Ruff & Reddy*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Elmer Fudd*)
- Ben DeNunez (*Rocky & His Friends*, *Bullwinkle*, *King Leonardo*)
- Paul Fung Jr. (*George of the Jungle*)
- Ken Hultgren (*Bambi*)
- Walt Kelly (*Pinocchio*, *The Three Caballeros*)
- Al Kilgore (*Bullwinkle*, *Fractured Fairy Tales*)
- John Ligerra (*Top Cat*, *Elmer Fudd*, *Bugs Bunny*, *Porky Pig*, *Yosemite Sam*, *MushMouse & Punkin Puss*, *Snagglepuss*, *Lippy the Lion & Hardy Har Har*)
- Hank Porter (*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*)
- Vive Risto (*Chilly Willy*)
- Tony Strobl (*Ludwig von Drake*, *The Jetsons*, *Uncle Scrooge*, and *This Is Your Life*, *Donald Duck*)
- Warren Tufts (*The Pink Panther*)
- Bill Ziegler (*The Addams Family*).

In a previously published letter, I mentioned Henry Scarpelli's prolific output on TV-related titles. I'd also like to mention two of the best artists in the field of movie and TV comics: Dan Spiegle (*That Darn Cat*, "Pete's Dragon" in *Walt Disney Showcase* #43, *Spin & Marty*, *The Funky Phantom*, *Clash of the Titans*, *Harlem Globetrotters*, *Tarzan*, *Don't Give up the Ship* (star-

ring Jerry Lewis), and, of course, *Scooby Doo*) and Alex Toth (*Johnny Tremain*, *Shaggy Dog*, *No Time for Sergeants*, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, *The Real McCoys*, *Rin Tin Tin*, *Old Yeller*, *Circus Boy*, and, of course, *Zorro*).

Other artists who have done movie and TV comics for Dell (and later Gold Key) include

- Frank Bolle (*Buck Rogers*, *Twilight Zone*)
- John Buscema (*Roy Rogers Comics*)
- Reed Crandall (*Twilight Zone*)
- Jose Delbo (*Bonanza*, *Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery*, *Buck Rogers*, *The New Adventures of Huck Finn*, *The Virginian*, *Yellow Submarine*)
- Gene Fawcette (*Gomer Pyle*, *Leave It to Beaver*)

- Bob Fuje (*Prince Valiant*)
- Alberto Giolitti (*Gunsmoke*, *King Kong*, *Star Trek*)

- Dick Giordano (*Gidget*, *Beach Blanket Bingo*, as well as the biographies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson)

- Robert L. Jenney (*The Creature*, *Frankenstein*, *The Wolfman*)

- Joe Kubert (*The Lone Ranger*)
- Russ Manning (*The Danny Thomas Show*, *Ricky Nelson*, *Tarzan*, *Wyatt Earp*)

- Al McWilliams (*Buck Rogers*, *I Spy*)
- Winslow Mortimer (*Battle of the Planets*), Mike Roy and Mike Peppe (*Daniel Boone*, *Krofft Supershow*, *The Munsters*, *Twilight Zone*)

- Mike Sekowsky (*The Life of Riley*, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Munsters*, *Peter Gunn*)

- Jack Sparling (*Adlai Stevenson*, *The Mummy*, *The Outer Limits*, *National Velvet*, *Room 222*, *UFO Flying Saucers*)

- Tony Tallarico (*The Incredible Mr. Limpet*, *F-Troop*, *Car 54 Where Are You?*)

- John Tartaglione (*John F. Kennedy*, *Lyndon B. Johnson*)

- Angelo Torres (*The Monkees*; *Who's Mind- ing the Mint?*)

- Sal Trapani (*Get Smart*, *Hogan's Heroes*)
- Warren Tufts (*Zorro*, *Wagon Train*, *High Chaparral*)

- Bill Williams (*Happy Days*, *The Three Stooges*)

- Al Williamson (*Flash Gordon*, *Twilight Zone*)

Of course, this list is by no means complete, and any additions or corrections are welcome.

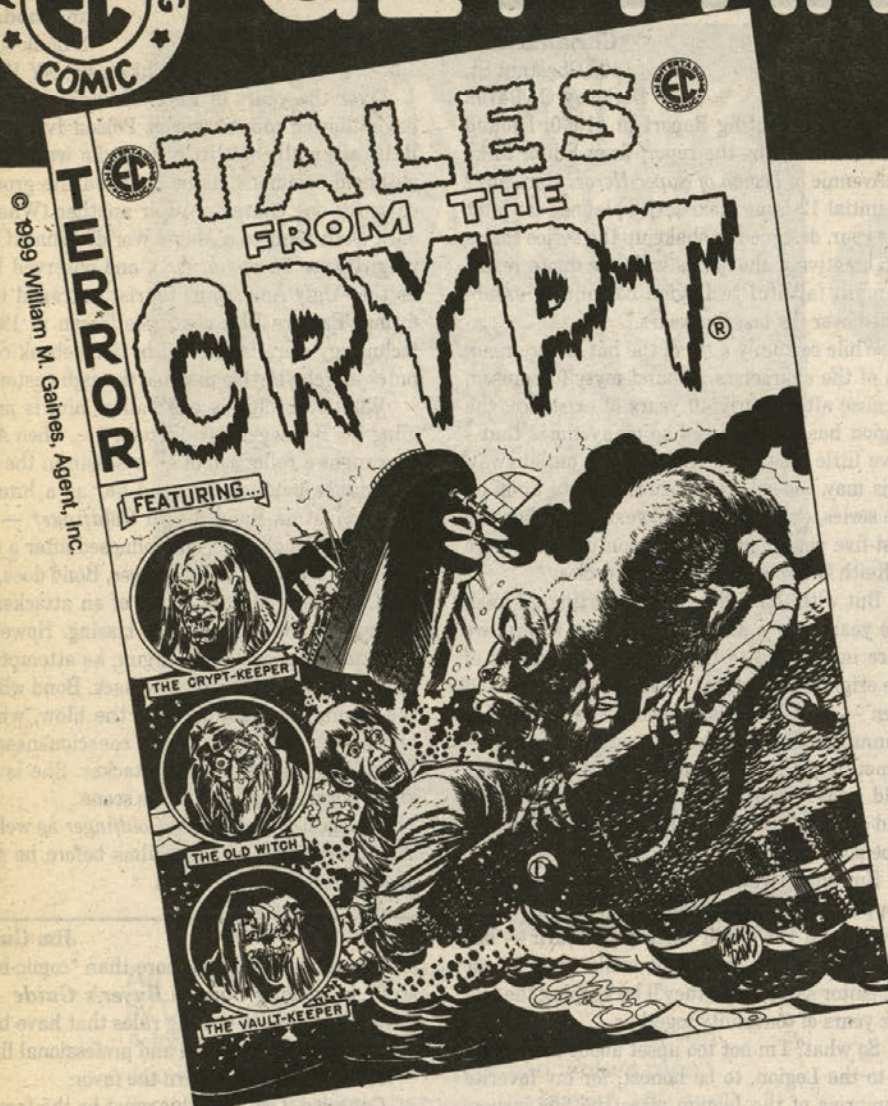
[I like breaking them up by genre, though there are some crossovers. Morris Gollub was always one of my very favorite artists, a master of stories featuring anthropomorphic animals and real-world children's adventures. Little-known today, his work was terrific. Try "Santa and the Angel" in *Santa Claus Funnies*. I think Bill Wright redrew Floyd Gottfredson for the Mickey Mouse serials in the back of *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* (with instructions to change every panel), though deep analysis of that history will have to wait for the magic moment I can dig out boxed correspondence from 20 years ago. Jack Bradbury (best known for work in comics like *Coo Coo*) did Donald Duck and some other Disney characters.

Oh, and there was the stunning work by Dan Noonan, again, little-known today. Among his most impressive work was an adaptation of Dickens' *Christmas Carol* for one of the 25¢ specials, but he did the "Rover" serial in *Animal Comics* and the "Egbert Elephant and His Friends" shorts in *Raggedy Ann + Andy*]

(Continues on Page 20)



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Oh, So?

From
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Chris Juricich
1808 Chestnut St.
Berkeley, CA 94702

In your Scouting Report in #1340, I found myself amused by the report from Editor Mike McAvennie of *Legion of Super-Heroes* that, after an initial 12-issue maxi-series planned for later this year, designed to shake up the series *status quo* creatively, the series will, the quote reads, "remain faithful to Legion continuity established over the last five years."

While certainly a tip of the hat to core readers of the characters, I found myself bemused, because after nearly 40 years of existence, the Legion has been altered so many times that I have little clue as to what's going on, anyway. This may, indeed, be a logical time to jump on the series, as I did about 10 years ago when the post-five years "grizzled" Legion under the eye of Keith Giffen was wowing the proles.

But with the Giffen years, starting off fresh five years into a dark and nebulous future, we were introduced to the sweet young clones of the originals, all bright and 60s-something, and then — well, it got all mucky. The "older" Legionnaires disappeared into outer space or — something, the new young clone-Legionnaires held sway? Then the earth was — destroyed? And all the cities of Earth escaped in bubble-escape pods —

But then, well, it was said to have never happened? Earth *wasn't* destroyed? Jeez, stretch and yawn and when you return — hoo hah! All of which makes me smile when I hear the editor saying that they'll be keeping the last five years of continuity together.

So what? I'm not too upset about the changes to the Legion, to be honest, for my favorite memories of the Legion were the 60s issues: John Forte, Curt Swan, Jim Shooter. The Legion was fun and silly and comfortable, and I was content with the melodrama. Not to slight the intervening years, but The Legion is best served with milk and Twinkies, not as a martini (shaken, not stirred, with an olive on the side). At least, to me.

Yet, there's a point in all this. How does one invest emotional capital in these characters if they end up being treated so cavalierly by the latest creative team? If one makes a creative error in judgment that everybody hates completely, and continuity is adjusted to have it readjusted, I think I could handle that once. One time.

But to do it with the regularity of a revolving door with new creative bents being ushered in every few years and flushing out the old: After a while, who really gives a hoot about the characters? How can you trust in them or care about them? Spider-Man and Aunt May provide the best example of messing up continuity. Spidey was once my favorite character. Now, who knows? And The Legion? As I said, I haven't invested much caring in their universe, despite having read (out of bargain bins, mind you) most of the last few years of their story, but it's only competent, not compelling.

I have learned to take a jaded look at any "new look" tossed in front of me. Projektra is a

white-haired babe — No, she's a snake. Spider-Man is Ben Reilly, but, no, he's Peter Parker. Aunt May is dead and, no, she isn't. Earth has been destroyed in 2999 AD but, no, it hasn't.

Jim Woodard

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Over the years of Peter David's column I have allowed him to win at Poison Ivy Volley Ball (after all, his little girl was watching), withheld comment, as he changed the ground rules for one character after another (What if Jack Deth went to a Magic World? What if Supergirl were an angel? etc.), and observed him as the "Ugly American" tourist outraged that former Eastern Bloc countries frozen in 1940s technology were fascinated by a notebook computer — delaying his passage through customs.

What I absolutely can't allow him is mangling his Bondage. David wrote, "... when Austin caught a reflection of an assassin in the eye of a dance partner, he used her as a human shield, just as Bond did in *Goldfinger* — although in Bond's case, she collapsed after a single bullet." Wrong. In *Goldfinger*, Bond does, indeed, see the reflected image of an attacker in the eyes of the woman he is kissing. However, the attacker does not use a gun; he attempts to clobber Bond with a weighted sack. Bond whirls the woman into the path of the blow, which knocks her out. She regains consciousness as Bond finishes killing the attacker. She is not killed nor is a gun fired in the scene.

I suggest David review *Goldfinger* as well as the other Bond and Flint films before he sees another Austin Powers film.

Jim Guida

I have always found more than "comic-book stuff" in reading *Comics Buyer's Guide* — I have found quality writing rules that have been put to use in my personal and professional life.

Now it is time to return the favor.

Canceled. One "L." This must be the famous exception to the rule we've heard so much about, but I have noticed in three separate stories over the last few months the word spelled "cancelled," most recently in Peter David's July 16 column.

Other than that, you're perfect.

[JMM: While not the proofreader on the pieces in question, I have to cop to being the refusenik here on "canceled." As our debates here have gone, I don't think you can have "canceled" unless you accept "cancelation," which we don't — and it seems incongruous to me to write that someone "excelled at finding canceled stamps." Both the Latin roots take the double "l," so that's my preference — but I yield to the editor. And here's her spirited defense:

MCT: My spirited defense is that I messed up. John is perfectly logical, but grammar and spelling isn't perfectly logical. We have a posted style sheet which clearly says, "canceled." (It also says, "traveler, traveled, traveling.") But I didn't catch it — and, obviously, our spell checking program doesn't follow our own style, so the error didn't get caught.

Thanks for catching it. The last person to tell me of my messing up this way was Harlan Ellison, who pointed out that I was consistently misspelling "embarrass." Appropriate.

Hey, I found a cool word origins note a

(Continues on Page 22)

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Oh, So?

From
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couple of weeks ago, and it seems just right for derailing the conversation: Didja know the word "sneeze" was originally spelled "fneeze"? Isn't that great? It was turned into "sneeze" because of the confusion in the 1700s over the appearance of the letter "s" at the time." I love the word "fneeze"; talk about onomatopoeia!

Jeff Dyer

1003 W. 5th St.

Dubuque, IA 52001

Another fun year at Wizard World. Lots of great people. I enjoyed visiting with George Pérez, Garth Ennis, Grant Morrison, Jerry Ordway, Andy Kubert, Alex Ross, Gene Ha, Tim Sale, Dan Jurgens, Erik Larsen, Mart Nodell, Jeph Loeb, and many others. But I also noticed a trend that is upsetting.

Ever find yourself standing in line at some convenience store, checkbook in hand, waiting to pay? As you're standing there, the check-out person is laughing and visiting with another employee, as if oblivious to your presence. I had a similar experience at Wizard World this year.

Twice in the course of the convention, I stood directly in front of two different professionals and waited. And waited. And waited. No, there was no line. In both cases, I was the only fan standing there. So why did I have to wait? The comic-book professional was visiting with another pro. Now, I don't mind if the pros want to visit with each other. I'm sure that many are friends and only see each other during the convention season. Still, when the pro visits for 10 minutes without even acknowledging the fan standing there, something is wrong.

Isn't the purpose of these conventions to allow the fans access to the pros and vice versa? Two creators whom I had previously admired acted quite rudely. If pros wish to visit with each other, fine. Still, how long would it take to turn to the fan and give an autograph or have a brief discussion, then resume the other conversation? Or, better yet, the pros should save their own conversations for after the show or during their lunch break.

As I said, I only noticed this happening with two creators. Most of the pros were very gracious, especially "The Nicest Man in Comics," Jerry Ordway. George Pérez also signed and sketched and posed for pictures, never losing his smile. Alex Ross, who is one of the classiest guys in comics, always puts the focus on his legion of fans. I also met the Whiteout team of Greg Rucka and Steve Lieber, who both seemed to be having a great time with their fans. Mark Waid has always impressed me, too, although I didn't have a chance to visit with him this year.

Again, I enjoyed Wizard World immensely. I would just challenge the pros to remember this is meant to be a time for the fans. We are, after all, your customers. We are the ones who ultimately allow you to make a living writing or drawing comics. For that reason, we deserve respect. At the very least, we should expect good manners. As for next year, I'd like to encourage Wizard World to try to bring in Alan Moore! Anyone else think that'd be a great idea?

[Some creators — like some people — are

downright jerks. But there can be other reasons for some types of behavior.

It's possible to respect and like people while needing to accomplish other ends. Since you're not specific about particular aspects of what happened to you (such as whether the pros were appearing at a company booth or standing in the con entrance hall), I'll deliberately avoid being specific, too. Other people reading this response should not assume that my general comments are aimed at what you did or who they were, since I don't know either.

(1) The vast majority of the pros at conventions have paid their own way to get there — and many have even paid for their own booth space. They were not brought in by the convention and they don't owe anyone anything. In fact, some have run up hefty bills in order to attend to do business.

(2) Moreover, pros attending lose money in another way, too: While they're attending a show, they're not working. For a freelancer, that means he or she is out the money he or she could have earned by staying home over the weekend. It's why more than one pro has pretty much given up con-going.

(3) Even people laughing and having a good time chatting may be in the midst of one or another sort of business. As you note, in many, many cases, these are professionals who may be working or planning together but may get to meet in person only once or twice a year. I try not to interrupt any such interlude with more than a sentence or two. Then I leave unless invited to stay.

(4) As for "The pros should save their own conversations for after the show or during their lunch break," I point out again that they're not some sort of professional act that has been booked to entertain steadily throughout an eight-and-a-half-hour day. I, for one, didn't leave the convention for lunch any of the three days of the show. I grabbed bottled water and a quick bite at the booth. (Thanks, Elizabeth Kowols! Those muffins kept me going!) Now, I was on salary, doing a job — though I hasten to point out it's something I love to do. But another pro who's there may be losing money in order to set up networking in hopes of a professional payoff in a year or two. In that case, it's those conversations that brought the pro to the show — and the fans benefit from the chance to be in an environment packed with countless pros.

(5) On the other hand, pros I've observed doing booth or table duty do consider themselves "on" for the event and try to keep an eye out for people who want to chat. Of course, then the problem they (and I) have is focusing fully on one conversation while not ignoring everyone else. Take my word for it, this is hard — especially when the booth doesn't have at least two other staffers to do such other booth work as selling the items that are for sale and handing out free copies, when we have those available. I know I'm going to end up in San Diego accidentally ignoring someone I wanted to talk to — and I may have done the same with someone in Chicago. In fact, I only got to exchange about three sentences with Jeph Loeb when I'd been looking forward to an actual chat. And I actually had a question for Rucka and Lieber — and never got to see them.

Frankly, it's concerns over seeming to offend and never being able to be private that makes some of the big names avoid most cons. □

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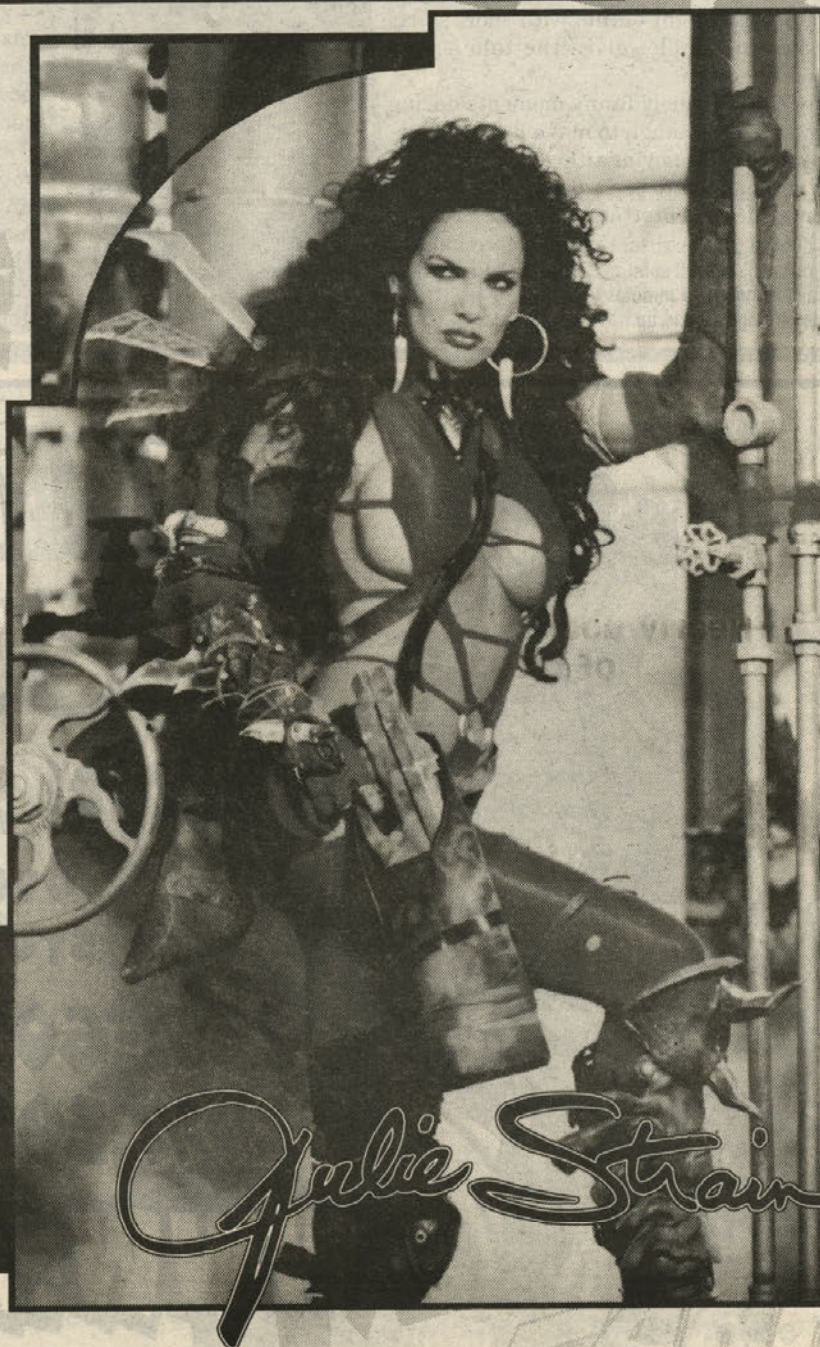
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Reviewed by Joyce Greenholdt

Debutante Detective Corps

A.D. Vision

The five richest girls in Japan have been targeted by a trio of murderers who escaped from jail. Deciding that the police aren't moving quickly enough, these high-school girls take matters into their own hands, using their electronics, disguise, martial arts, advanced weaponry, and power-flirting skills.

Debutante Detective Corps is a mercifully short tale featuring lots of over-the-top cartoon violence, gratuitous property damage, and well-endowed (in every sense of the word) girls striking poses in tight outfits with short skirts. A thin helping of plot gives the tale a semblance of coherence.

There are genuinely funny moments during the show but not enough to make it worth putting up with the annoying title characters. It's fluff. If you happen to be in the right mood, it could be modestly entertaining, but there are

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Pioneer

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who's orphaned in a three-way battle between Japanese occupation forces, aliens, and one of the Kishin robots.

The animators did a terrific job in designing the robots. They incorporate many recognizable components from the period, such as the jet engines which provide their motive power, giving each robot a sort of "retro high-tech" look. In keeping with the idea that these are makeshift constructions, the Kishin robots require a lot of manpower to maintain and get started. Teams of workers have to manually start each of the engines, and scores of vacuum tubes get burned out just to

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get enough power to get the machine moving.

Settings are rendered with the same eye for detail and historical accuracy. The large cast of characters is also handled well, taking time to flesh out personalities of major characters and even the supporting cast. The dubbed version has very good voice actors — with one exception: the Kishin Corps' head scientist sounds so annoying that it is tempting to fast-forward through any of his scenes. The other minor annoyances in the series are occasional pointless musical interludes. Fortunately, these tend to be few and far between.

The actual storytelling is very good, especially where tensions among different factions are shown. The story does assume that viewers will have at least a basic knowledge of the time period, and there are nice details that will reward viewers with more in-depth knowledge.

However, it leaves a lot of questions about the aliens unanswered. Why are they invading? Are the "soldiers" we see in battle actually living beings or some kind of construct? While it's perhaps more realistic that these things are left undiscovered, it's certainly less satisfying.

Still, the story is entertaining. Until someone makes a top-notch adaptation of Harry Turtledove's *World War* series of novels, this is the best show about aliens attacking Earth during World War II that you'll find.



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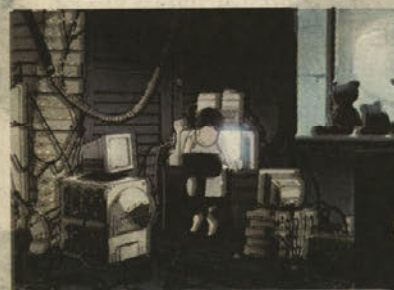


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"Dateless" **Yota**, finds himself helping the girl he loves pursue his best friend. This may make him a loser, but his selflessness allows him to find a mysterious video store that gives him a special tape. To his great shock, when Yota plays the VHS tape, a girl, **Ai**, emerges from his TV to comfort his broken heart!



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Lain



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PILOT - MATTOK

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Sideshow Toy has announced the release of its second series of action figures based on characters from Universal Studios' classic monster movies. The three figures in this release are *The Phantom of the Opera* (above), *The Bride of Frankenstein* (below), and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

The latter two figures were sculpted by Oluf W. Hartvigson, while *The Phantom* was sculpted by Mat Falls. Each figure has 12 points of articulation and comes with a base with an engraved nameplate as well as several accessories.

The figures are scheduled to ship in August to both mass-market retailers and direct-market comics and hobby shops. A limited-edition boxed set will be available later this year exclusively at FAO Schwarz.



"... a collection of rousing good comic-book stories, done by masters ..."

— R.C. Harvey

By Maggie Thompson

The art shown here demonstrates a few of the problems reprint book designers have in preparing new editions of classic comics material. On the left is a chunk of *Special Edition Comics* #1 (and only) from 1940. It was the first comic book completely devoted to Captain Marvel; *Whiz*, where The Big Red Cheese began earlier in the year, was an anthology title. It's reproduced here at 100% with no scanner enhancements and appeared on a left page. On the right below is the same chunk from *The Shazam! Archives*, Vol. 2 (1999, DC, ISBN 1-56389-521-8, \$49.95) at 100% with no scanner enhancements. It ran on a right page.

In providing a faithful reprint, the designers have to cope with blue tints of inks, browning of pages, and the problems of conveying the original lines while referring to blotchy printed copies. It really doesn't convey the feel — but it may be the best that

can be done with current technology, bringing to fans stories that could cost \$800 if "creased, scuffed, abraded, and soiled."

But (as they say) that's not all! You get *Captain Marvel Adventures* #1 (1941, \$2,333 in the aforementioned condition — "the only Captain Marvel book to be produced without [C.C.] Beck's artistic supervision") and Captain Marvel stories (including guests in the *Spy Smasher* feature) from *Whiz* #15-20. You're not going to have these lying around the house — to read for the fun you should have with them — unless you have this keen compendium.

Moreover, R.C. Harvey's introduction puts the material into perspective (see his quote on *Adventures*, above), a bonus that lets the current reader know details that the kids of the 1940s didn't even guess at. These aren't the goony episodes those kids grew to love — but they're four-color magic, nevertheless.



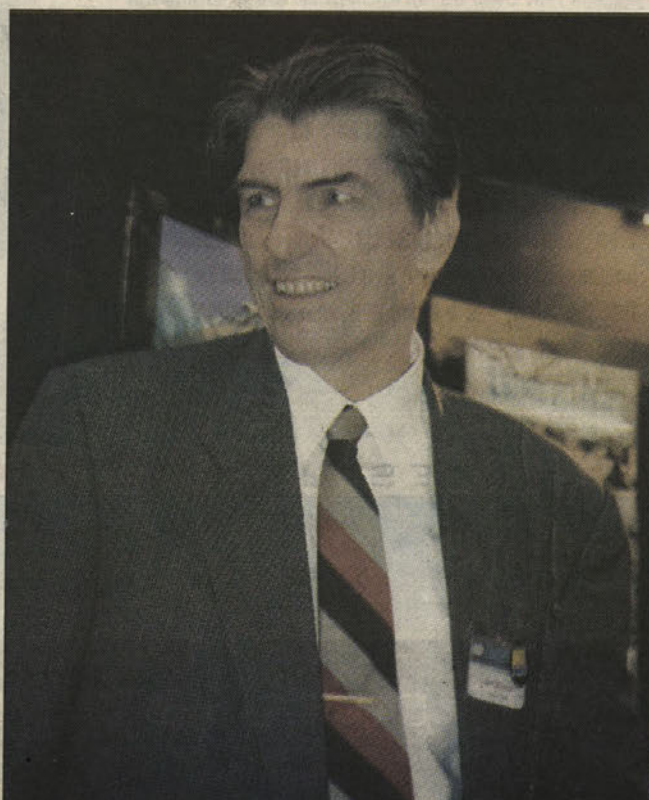
Jim Shooter returns to Acclaim writing 'Unity 2000' to start in November

At the Chicago comics convention in July, Acclaim Comics announced that Jim Shooter will return to write the Valiant characters he helped create. They will appear in the six-issue mini-series *Unity 2000*, which will ship its first issue in November. Penciller on the project is Jim Starlin, and inker is Joe Rubenstein. Janet Jackson will color covers.

The story concept brings characters of the relatively recent Acclaim universe into conflict with those of Shooter's original Valiant universe — and provides new plotlines and characters for future continuity. "I'm thrilled to have a chance to write the Valiant characters again," Shooter said, "and to have a crack at the many interesting ideas and characters that were developed after I left Valiant Comics."

Excited fans immediately surrounded Shooter at the Acclaim booth, as he pinned on his identification tag; they peppered him with questions about his plans, expressing hopes of seeing more of his work soon. "We're very excited about Jim's involvement in this project," said Acclaim Editor Michael Marts. "It's a story we've been wanting to do for a long time, and we always thought that Jim would be the perfect man for the job ... and the story he's created has far exceeded our expectations." Publisher Walter Black said, "Fans are sure to love the return to the original Valiant universe, but, believe me, that's only the beginning."

Valiant's super-hero titles became some of the most popular in the industry in the mid-1990s with huge sales on such titles as *Turok*, *Magnus*, *Harbinger*, and *X-O Manowar*.



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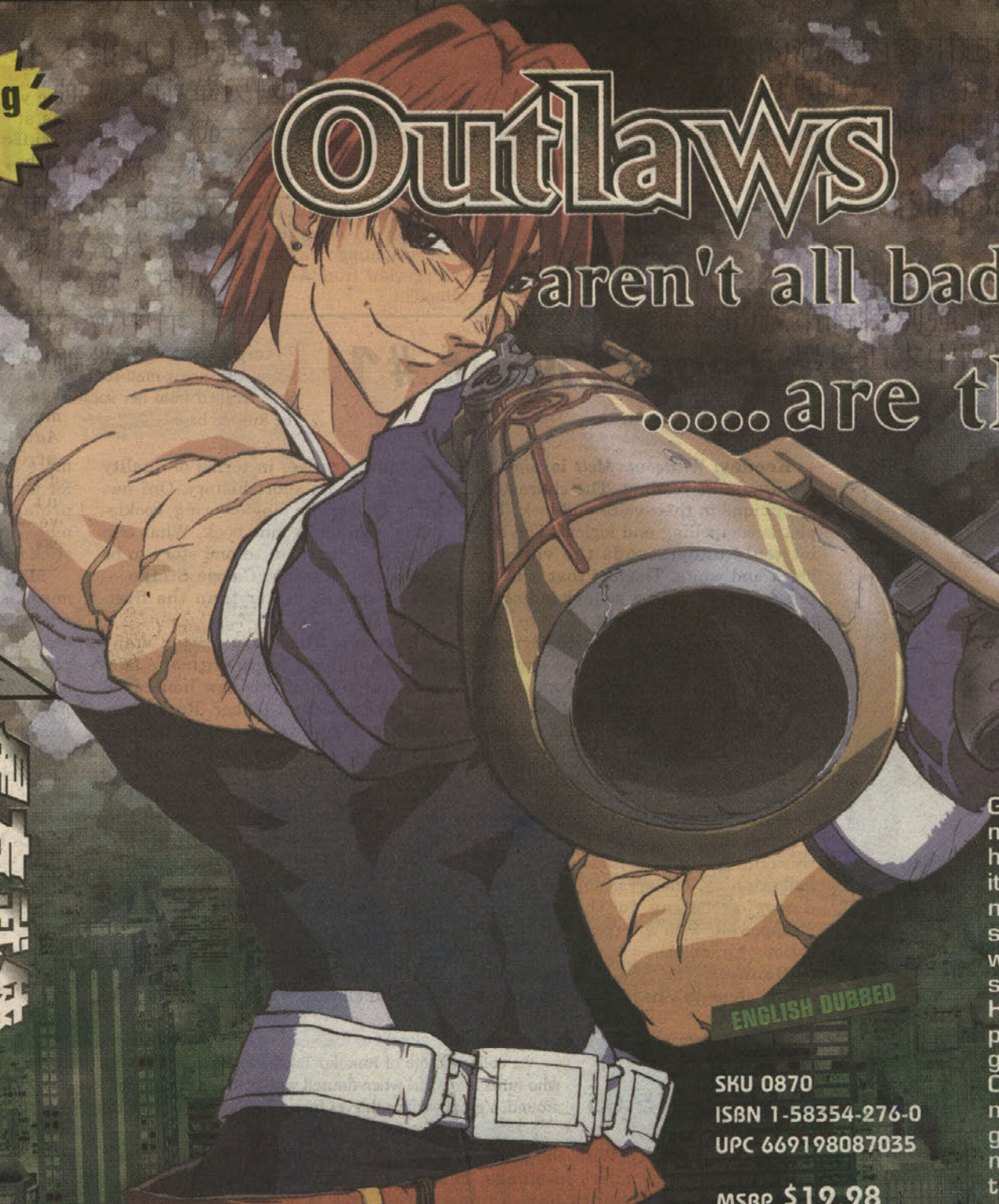
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COMICS IN YOUR FUTURE

Publisher's & Retailer Picks & Reviews For September releases

A number of publishers were recently asked to choose, from the material they have scheduled to ship in September, which titles they felt would be most worthy of the attention of readers and collectors. Participating retailers were then asked to predict how popular each title will be and to grade each preview from A+ to F, according to how successful they found it as a work of art or entertainment.



Whiteout: Melt #1

Oni, 32 pages, b/w, \$2.95

Keeney: *Whiteout: Melt* is some of comics' finest reading. The characters are unique in their voice and look. The plot is compelling and logical. The artist truly understands the value of black and white. The fact that it is being referred to as a sequel indicates that the story is thought of more as a novel or film than a comics series. I hope *Whiteout* is a runaway success, spawning scads of copycat comics. We sure could use mature, well-written, exciting, character-oriented murder mysteries that appeal to a wider demographic than does Spider-Man. Grade: A+.

Bahls: Espionage, terror, and government intervention — these make up this mini-series. This issue was intense and gripping. The art is superb and the dialog arresting in this mystery wrapped up with international ramifications. Grade: A-.

Bennett: The first *Whiteout* mini-series shouldn't have come as such a

pleasant surprise, in terms of quality or sales. In its short history, Oni has never produced a single boring, cookie-cutter, ordinary comic book. What is a surprise is there's a second story to be told about Marshal Carrie Stetko — and it may be better than the first. Grade: B.

Biggers: There are all too many films that don't begin with the suspenseful punch of this new limited series by Rucka and Lieber. Rucka succeeds in blending mystery-suspense and comics in a way that few others have managed. (Sure, there are a lot of them are PI stories or hard-boiled noir adventures; *Whiteout* is neither.) Lieber's art is perfectly suited to the story content. Grade: A+.

Lawton: A solid if unspectacular first chapter of what might turn out to be an interesting thriller. What's lacking thus far is the kind of twist or hook that will elevate *Whiteout: Melt* beyond

Greg Rucka and Steve Lieber return to their Antarctica-based mystery series with a new mini-series adventure of Deputy Marshal Carrie Stetko. She's recalled from her vacation to investigate a mysterious explosion at the Russian base.

mere James Bond level. Extra credit for fascinating historical tidbits in the preface, but #2 will definitely need more oomph if this reader is going to stick with the series. Grade: B.

Mateer: The original *Whiteout* was one of last year's unexpected pleasures, with its unusual setting, careful research, and compelling characters and plot. This sequel promises more of the same. There are signs that this version may be trying too hard to top itself (it starts with the slaughter of an entire research station on the ice, thereby sacrificing the smaller scale that was one of the attractions of the original series), but with Deputy Marshal Carrie Stetko back on the case, freckles and all, it promises an effective, well-told story. (And, when you live in Phoenix, Ariz., in the summer, like some of us, stories about Antarctica are particularly welcome.) Grade: A-.

Retailers' grade: A-

Retailer panelists reviewing September titles:

Peggy Bahls
Cosmic Comics,
Helena, MT



S.A. Bennett
Dark Star Books
& Comics,
Yellow Springs, OH

Cliff Biggers
Dr. No's Comics,
Marietta, GA

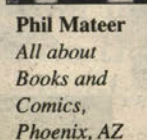


Mike Keeney
Comic Corner,
Huntsville, AL

Tom Lawton
Newbury
Comics
Boston, MA



Phil Mateer
All about
Books and
Comics,
Phoenix, AZ



Ranma ½ Vol. 14

Viz, 184 pages, b/w, \$15.95

Mateer: *Ranma ½* has been getting more and more American attention lately, largely because of the cartoon video series and the silly but interesting premise. As manga, it's related to *Oh My Goddess*, *Lum*, and other stories that assemble a large cast of eccentric characters and then mix in supernatural or martial arts elements plus a will-they-or-won't-they love interest. New readers might want to try out earlier graphic collections first to get more familiar with all the players and their relationships, but otherwise this is a good example of the genre: fast-moving, often funny, and always entertaining. Grade: B.

Bennett: It's business as usual at the Tendo dojo with the usual assortment of strange visitors who create complications that seem to expand exponen-

tially. With the greatest cast of characters in manga, month in and month out, *Ranma ½* remains a treasure. Grade: B.

Biggers: *Ranma ½* is always entertaining, although there are very few surprises any more. The series' charm makes it interesting reading, though, and the endearing quality of the *Ranma* saga gives the story an all-ages appeal. Grade: A-.

Keeney: *Ranma ½* is wacky. Once you accept the premise, anything is possible. The silliness only gets more absurd from there. Neat characters, wild action, and boatloads of craziness have made *Ranma ½* one of the most popular and long-running manga in America. Grade: A.

Bahls: The *Ranma* series continues in its usual vein. Akane, Ukyo, and Shampoo are chasing after Ranma, Ryoga is

following Akane, and Mousse is after Shampoo. As always, Ranma is only interested in himself and getting away. If you have been following this series from the beginning, the plot line is getting a little old. The series has ended in Japan, and Viz is continuing to release the books. If you love this series, you can expect more of the same. Grade: B.

Lawton: An engaging tale featuring talking pork buns and Ranma's dad that will appeal to all follicle-challenged men. Though not generally a fan of manga, I found this story to feature enough goofball humor and personal resonance (can you say receding hairline?) to keep me reading long after many others have put me to sleep. Grade: B.

Retailers' grade: B+

Viz collects more of Rumiko Takahashi's manga series featuring the misadventures of a male martial artist who turns into a girl when doused with cold water and back into a boy when doused with hot water. This time around, a group of four thieves from China come after the Dragon's Whisker that ties Ranma's pigtail.



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"This should challenge your preconceptions of what comics are and can be"

— S.A. Bennett

Combustion

Fantagraphics, 56 pages, b/w, \$7.95

Lawton: *Combustion* is an incredible achievement: dark, frightening, and conscientious. Throughout this tale runs a streak of dual moralities: The dutiful soldier does his part to purge a foreign land of the immorality he is told exists there but he is taught another morality when he sees the devastation there wrought by his fellow soldiers and him. Little wonder that the dedication of *Combustion* contains two Vietnamese names. Lanier seems to have interpolated some very personal stories into his work. Stunning. Grade: A+.

Bahls: A surrealistic and intense look at war using a not-often-seen style of woodcut art. The wordless art style can be very effective — or can fail miserably if not done right. Lanier falls into the former category.

The stark realism of the intense black-and-white drawings emphasizes the true nature of man at his worst. This shows that stories without words are not just for kids. Words aren't necessary to tell this story. Grade: B+.

Bennett: The standard line is comics has to be words and pictures working together, but there's something strangely compelling about this woodcut novel that proves otherwise. Clear and focused, haunting and effective, this should challenge your preconceptions of what comics are and can be — and teach a lot of "hot" artists what good storytelling is. Grade: A.

Biggers: It's a pretty collection of woodcut art. The story is very flat. The art is so stylized that it's hard to

New artist Chris Lanier presents a parable on war, drawn in a woodcut style. The story presents the adventures of a soldier lost in a ravaged country.

tell what Lanier wants us to see in some panels. All in all, not worth the effort it takes to try to pull a story out of this dreary compendium. Grade: D-.

Keeney: Each panel of this graphic novel is a well-balanced, meaningful work of art. When put together, the panels create a dynamic, striking, and beautifully timed story. The bold, jagged art (reminiscent of Peter Kuper) and richly detailed plot make *Combustion* a compelling graphic novel and part of my collection. Grade: A.

Mateer: As a comics medium, woodcut illustration, by its very nature, lends itself to the darkly symbolic. Heavy placement of blacks on the page and the inevitable chunkiness of the lines give the images a

solid weight and authority. This wordless, surreal parable about war (and its spiritual cost to both victor and vanquished) has a confident magic-realism touch worthy of a Borges or Marquez. It offers a series of searing images — of desperate soldiers, madness, civilian casualties, self-immolation, and death — that have the power of nightmare and of myth. Fantagraphics' press release compares this to *Maus*, which is a considerable stretch. Still, it's worthy of at least being on the same shelf with Spiegelman's work. If your experience with comics is limited to semi-realistic super-hero stuff, this should be a revelation, albeit a disturbing one. Grade: A-.

Retailers' grade: B+

HEAD OF THE CLASS (tie)

Strange Adventures #1

DC, 32 pages, color, \$2.50

Keeney: Most recent successful anthologies (*Eclipse Monthly*, *Negative Burn*, and *Dark Horse Presents*) have been a hodgepodge of styles and genres. *Strange Adventures* features ironic, weird, and creepy stories that make *The Twilight Zone* look tame. Each story is heavy on narrative and light on dialogue, covering a lot of ground in a small space. Wild concepts beautifully executed by top talents give this comic book a high grade. Grade: A.

Bahls: With writers of the caliber of Gibbons and Bolland, you can't go wrong. Of the three stories here I liked "Immune" the best. These will appeal to anyone interested in the horror genre.

Grade: B-.

Lawton: A nice compendium of the creepy, the hilarious, and the exotic. "The Kapas" captures the Victorian-era British *sang froid* so well Rudyard Kipling might have written it. Gibbons' wonderful *Weird Science* pastiche puts a psychedelic twist on technology-gone-amuck science fiction, and "Immune" is the kind of end-of-the-world story viewers used to love on *The Twilight Zone*. A fine job. Grade: A.

Bennett: Anthologies are a hard sell in today's market, but DC proves all you need to make one a critical and commercial success is to get top creators to do some of their best work. Grade: A.

Biggers: At first I was expecting a science-fiction anthology à la the original *Strange Adventures*, a series that survived for more than 20 years. But what's here is much more diverse: a collection of stories that are — well, they're strange tales. The Bolland story, a *Ripley's Believe It or Not* sort of tale with a unique twist, was my favorite. The Gibbons tale, which pays homage to DC science-fiction comics of the 1950s, was somehow less impressive than I had hoped but interesting, nevertheless. I came away eager to read further issues — and that's always a good sign. Grade: A.

Mateer: As a Vertigo anthology mini-series, like *Gangland* and

Weird War Tales, this offers both advantages (we get to see short-form work by Bolland, Gibbons, and Corben, among others) and disadvantages (the good stuff goes by quickly, and the quality varies — it's hard to create an effective six- or eight-page story). Fortunately, all three tales previewed here have their strong points. The best was the Gibbons offering, a sly tribute to the original *Strange Adventures* and its oft-startling science-fiction covers ("The Man with Saturn's Head!") that even manages to sneak in a gorilla. That's science — and pretty strange, too. Grade: B.

Retailers' grade: A-

"A nifty little fairy tale that contains just enough oddball elements for the adults."

— Tom Lawton

Duncan's Kingdom #1

Image, 32 pages, b/w, \$2.95

Bennett: There sure are a lot of frogs floating in the collective unconscious — first Betti Cosmo's pal Croaker, then the frog soldiers from *Battle Chasers*, now the decidedly Chinese-style amphibians from *Duncan's Kingdom*. It's a wonderfully realized fairy-tale world of great characters (Brother Patchwork — guy wearing a mask or some sort of quilt golem?) and rousing adventure. But watch out for that last page. Grade: B.

Biggers: Light-hearted fantasy, similar in tone to *Castle Waiting* but not quite so quirky. Has a lot of

the novice-hero tone so evident in Zander Cannon's *Replacement God*. What's here is well done but nothing to make it a favorite. I'm still willing to give it a few issues before I make a final judgement — largely because what's here is capably written, and the art is solid and appealing. Grade: B-.

Keeney: *Duncan's Kingdom* has everything a comics reader wants: beautiful art, dynamic story, great action, odd but familiar characters, and tons of mysteries. Fans of fun action-adventure comics like *Bone*, *Akiko*, *Leave It to Chance*, *Tellos*, and *Castle Waiting* will love this. Grade: A+.

Lawton: This is a nifty little fairy tale that contains just enough oddball elements for the adults who

might find *The Princess and the Frog* geared too much toward children. It could well be developed into a Pepsi commercial. Grade: B+.

Mateer: This is a fairy tale with a twist (or a series of them). The plot seems like a conventional hero-on-a-quest-in-a-medieval-kingdom bit, but the story keeps going in unexpected directions, complicating and enriching the reader's view of the characters and their world. There are no simple heroes, or situations, here. Kirk's art has a smooth, animation-inspired clarity that reminds me of Paul Smith and does a good job of complementing the writing style. (Both look deceptively simple, but only at first glance.) Only half the first issue was available for preview, so it's

possible that the whole thing will crash and burn in the end — but the beginning is encouraging. If you still stereotype Image comics as all grim-faced super-heroes, full-page panels that don't advance the story, lots of crosshatching and weird anatomy, etc., think again. This is a good indicator of how far Image has come. Grade: B.

Bahls: A fairy tale with a twist. The hero is the one least likely to be selected to seek revenge for the sake of the princess. He is inept and uncoordinated when fighting. The plot twist of the ending interlacing with his earlier dreams is a hoot. Does he get the girl? Read it to find out. Grade: B.

Retailers' grade: B+



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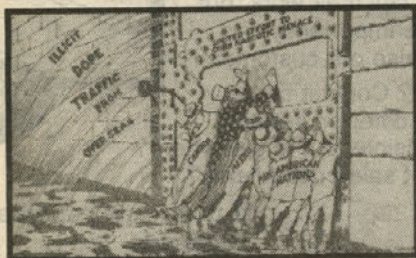
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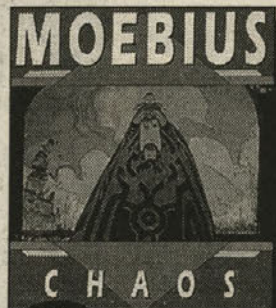
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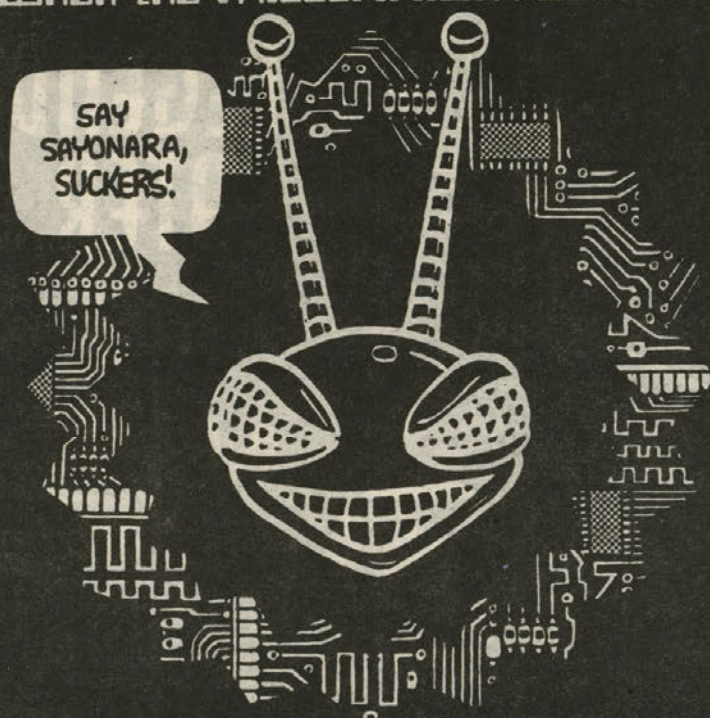
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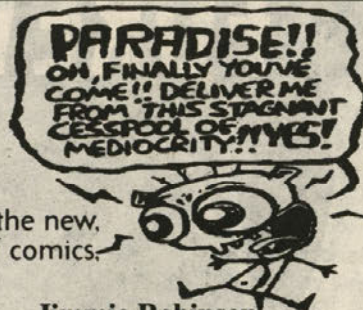
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By Maggie Thompson

See magical lines.



Good-Bye, Chunky Rice. Written and drawn by Craig Thompson (no relation). Top Shelf, P.O. Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061. (Oct 99, ISBN 1-891830-09-0, black and white trade paperback, \$14.95)

Chunky Rice is a turtle child setting out into the world — “like a little flower that’s outgrown its pot and needs to be transplanted in order to keep growing.” His story — and the stories of other characters in this fantasy — are about loss and replacing what’s been lost. The book is about needs and filling needs. It’s about what makes happiness. It’s about unlikely anthropomorphic characters and strange humans. And all are affecting, as Thompson blends past and present with strong emotions, idiosyncratic expression, and controlled, clear cartooning.

There are moments of sheer, clear agony, as when Chunky’s acquaintance remembers a childhood moment: “So Paw be bundlin’ them pups up in a burlap sack ... And he be draggin’ that sack down by the

river. And when we gots there, he be makin’ me hold the sack underwater as it wriggled all up like jelly ... [“That’s right,” his father says. “Be a man.”] ... drowning jelly.” There are magical lines, both of art and script. And there are zany concepts: “I mean, I’ve had my share of motley crews, but a mute turtle kid & two sisters sharing the same torso sure takes the cake.”

If you’ve been following **CBG** reviews, you’ve already heard of this. It’s a shoo-in to be a finalist in industry awards. Be among the first to appreciate it.

Don’t miss this noir mosaic.



Amy Racecar Color Special #1 and Stray Bullets #17-20. Written and drawn by David Lapham. El Capitán, P.O. Box 351508, Los Angeles, CA 90035. (Jul 97 and Nov 98, Feb 99, Apr 99, Jul 99, black and white except for the special, \$2.95@)

Lapham’s *Stray Bullets* is an incredible achievement: a realistic, ongoing universe of people whose lives touch, separate, and touch again, each incident creating a stand-alone story. The epic isn’t in chronological order; Lapham dips into a moment here, a turning point there, to offer a voyeuristic glimpse of despair, horror, triumph, action, motivation — or something completely different.

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In what would seem on the surface to be a noir action world, Lapham manages to make the reader care about people that reader might not care to meet. Possibly his most popular character is Amy, who describes herself in #18, “In my life, I’ve been almost everything a person can be — an

infamous bank robber, a killer, a con artist, a science experiment, and a space traveler.” Yes, while much of the series is clearly dated and set in the past (#17 Jan 82, #19 Jun 82, #20 Aug 86), there’s a science-fictional (or is it a fantasy?) theme (*Special* dated Apr-Nov 3829) entwined, as well.

The first special is mentioned here, because the second is due out shortly — and the “feel” of the Amy SF stories is over-the-top different. In #18, she stars in a satire of noir movies, including Lapham’s character designs — the most noticeable being Robert Mitchum. In the first special, she went on a bright, lively, nutty Hawaiian vacation — well, sort of.

Issue #17 finds a wife trying to cope with a drunken, philandering husband — and his drunken buddies arriving on her doorstep; #19 features a woman determined to prove all men are no good and to punish them for it; #20 involves a husband trying to break off an illicit relationship but being quickly drawn into a situation that gets way out of control. Guns, casual brutality, dark humor, sex, twisted lives — and truly touching moments: These comics are not for kids — but they are for adults in search of compelling storytelling.

Take off for the '30s.



Captain Gravity #1-4 (of 4). Written by Stephen Vratatos, pencilled by Keith Martin, and inked by Rober Quijano. Penny-Farthing Press, 10370 Richmond Ave., Suite 980, Houston, TX 77042. (Dec 98, Jan 99, Feb 99, Mar 99, \$2.75)

It’s 1938, and a Poverty Row studio is in the midst of trying to film a super-hero movie on location at Chichen Itza in Mexico. Complicating the plans are Nazis, who have their own plans. Joshua Smith, a black assistant to the director, finds himself enmeshed in the problem of foiling the Nazis and saving the good people from the studio.

Smith is the viewpoint character, and Vratatos does a nice job of light scripting, portraying the naive good guy caught in forces that compel him to be a hero. The complete story actually could work pretty well as the sort of movie being put together in the story’s background.

The art isn’t up to the story, with such problems as that comedy relief and exposition master Professor Goethals and studio boss-creep Dick Wurtz are drawn so that they are almost indistinguishable. And the artists’ ability to use computers to fuzz the background occasionally is no substitute for dynamic posing and mastery of anatomy. Nevertheless, the characters are appealing, and the set-up is promising.

Prepare for shudders.

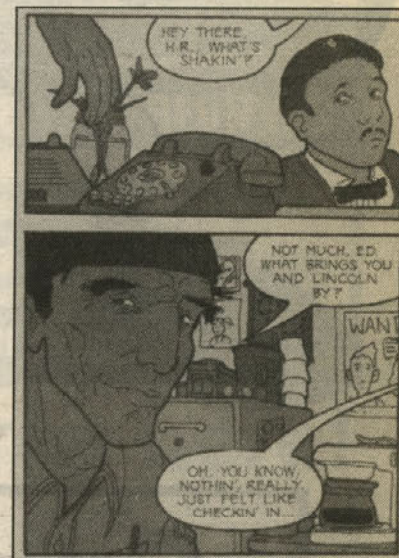


Out for Blood. Written by Michael Part and Steven Grant and drawn by Gary Erskine, #1 (of 4), black and white, will go on sale from Dark Horse Sept. 29 for \$2.95.

It’s not for kids, folks, and this gang-oriented Los Angeles story has gangs that are more than run-of-the-mill dangers. Policeman Dan Sanger (above) is an expert on gangs, but the Wings and the Claws require expertise of a different type.

It’s dark fantasy storytelling, and the art clearly supports the combined requirements of detailed settings, distinctive characters, and fantastic horror.

Solve mysteries.



Happydale: Devils in the Desert #1 (of 2). Story by Andrew Dabb, art by Seth Fisher. DC. (1999, \$6.95)

This one isn’t for kids, either, but what starts as a simple repellent view of nasty slimebags wallowing in violence becomes something — well, something more. Fantastic elements (including deputy H.R., seen here) lurk, sometimes in the detailed corners, sometimes full-panel.

What’s going on in Happydale, anyway? Who are its residents? How did they end up together? Readers who are turned off by grim, gritty, and downright slimy focal characters may still find themselves drawn into an unusual mystery.



[Items for this feature, which lists appearances in comics stores and lecture halls — **not conventions** — of writers, artists, and editors should be submitted as far in advance as possible. We need information at least two weeks in advance of the signing to have a sporting chance of getting it in. Notices must be written — we cannot take these by telephone — and kept brief, preferably in the format used here. Send to **Now Appearing**, c/o Comics Buyer’s Guide, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54990 or fax it (again c/o **CBG**) to (715) 445-4087. This

is a free service.]

August 3

Christopher Lee (actor, author, opera singer) at Funny Business, 660B Amsterdam Ave. (at 92nd St.), New York, New York 10025, from 2 to 4 p.m.

August 7

Chris Ware (creator *Acme Novelty Library*) and **Daniel Clowes** (creator of *Eightball*) at Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7529 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, California, beginning at 2 p.m.

August 21

Mark Pacella (creator, *Tooth and Claw*) at Mile High Comics, 12591 Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove, California, from noon to 7 p.m.

September 15

Mark Pacella (creator, *Tooth and Claw*) at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, California, from 2 to 8 p.m.

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261 F	33.00		293 NM	7.00	217 NM	3.00	444 NM	3.00	115 NM	3.00	31 NM	17.00	31 NM	17.00	197 NM	3.00	23 F+	31.00	14 NM	4.00	96 VG+	3.00	11 F/VF	130.00
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276 VF	55.00		302 NM	7.00	226 NM	3.00	453 NM	3.00	124 NM	3.00	40 NM	26.00	40 NM	26.00	206 NM	3.00	32 F+	40.00	23 NM	4.00	105 VG+	3.00	20 F/VF	175.00
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278 VF	55.00		304 NM	7.00	228 NM	3.00	455 NM	3.00	126 NM	3.00	42 NM	28.00	42 NM	28.00	208 NM	3.00	34 F+	42.00	25 NM	4.00	107 VG+	3.00	22 F/VF	185.00
279 VF	55.00		305 NM	7.00	229 NM	3.00	456 NM	3.00	127 NM	3.00	43 NM	29.00	43 NM	29.00	209 NM	3.00	35 F+	43.00	26 NM	4.00	108 VG+	3.00	23 F/VF	190.00
280 VG	55.00		306 NM	7.00	230 NM	3.00	457 NM	3.00	128 NM	3.00	44 NM	30.00	44 NM	30.00	210 NM	3.00	36 F+	44.00	27 NM	4.00	109 VG+	3.00	24 F/VF	195.00
281 VG	55.00		307 NM	7.00	231 NM	3.00	458 NM	3.00	129 NM	3.00	45 NM	31.00	45 NM	31.00	211 NM	3.00	37 F+	45.00	28 NM	4.00	110 VG+	3.00	25 F/VF	200.00
282 VG	55.00		308 NM	7.00	232 NM	3.00	459 NM	3.00	130 NM	3.00	46 NM	32.00	46 NM	32.00	212 NM	3.00	38 F+	46.00	29 NM	4.00	111 VG+	3.00	26 F/VF	205.00
283 VG	55.00		309 NM	7.00	233 NM	3.00	460 NM	3.00	131 NM	3.00	47 NM	33.00	47 NM	33.00	213 NM	3.00	39 F+	47.00	30 NM	4.00	112 VG+	3.00	27 F/VF	210.00
284 VG	55.00		310 NM	7.00	234 NM	3.00	461 NM	3.00	132 NM	3.00	48 NM	34.00	48 NM	34.00	214 NM	3.00	40 F+	48.00	31 NM	4.00	113 VG+	3.00	28 F/VF	215.00
285 VG	55.00		311 NM	7.00	235 NM	3.00	462 NM	3.00	133 NM	3.00	49 NM	35.00	49 NM	35.00	215 NM	3.00	41 F+	49.00	32 NM	4.00	114 VG+	3.00	29 F/VF	220.00
286 VG	55.00		312 NM	7.00	236 NM	3.00	463 NM	3.00	134 NM	3.00	50 NM	36.00	50 NM	36.00	216 NM	3.00	42 F+	50.00	33 NM	4.00	115 VG+	3.00	30 F/VF	225.00
287 VG	55.00		313 NM	7.00	237 NM	3.00	464 NM	3.00	135 NM	3.00	51 NM	37.00	51 NM	37.00	217 NM	3.00	43 F+	51.00	34 NM	4.00	116 VG+	3.00	31 F/VF	230.00
288 VG	55.00		314 NM	7.00	238 NM	3.00	465 NM	3.00	136 NM	3.00	52 NM	38.00	52 NM	38.00	218 NM	3.00	44 F+	52.00	35 NM	4.00	117 VG+	3.00	32 F/VF	235.00
289 VG	55.00		315 NM	7.00	239 NM	3.00	466 NM	3.00	137 NM	3.00	53 NM	39.00	53 NM	39.00	219 NM	3.00	45 F+	53.00	36 NM	4.00	118 VG+	3.00	33 F/VF	240.00
290 VG	55.00		316 NM	7.00	240 NM	3.00	467 NM	3.00	138 NM	3.00	54 NM	40.00	54 NM	40.00	220 NM	3.00	46 F+	54.00	37 NM	4.00	119 VG+	3.00	34 F/VF	245.00
291 VG	55.00		317 NM	7.00	241 NM	3.00	468 NM	3.00	139 NM	3.00	55 NM	41.00	55 NM	41.00	221 NM	3.00	47 F+	55.00	38 NM	4.00	120 VG+	3.00	35 F/VF	250.00
292 VG	55.00		318 NM	7.00	242 NM	3.00	469 NM	3.00	140 NM	3.00	56 NM	42.00	56 NM	42.00	222 NM	3.00	48 F+	56.00	39 NM	4.00	121 VG+	3.00	36 F/VF	255.00
293 VG	55.00		319 NM	7.00	243 NM	3.00	470 NM	3.00	141 NM	3.00	57 NM	43.00	57 NM	43.00	223 NM	3.00	49 F+	57.00	40 NM	4.00	122 VG+	3.00	37 F/VF	260.00
294 VG	55.00		320 NM	7.00	244 NM	3.00	471 NM	3.00	142 NM	3.00	58 NM	44.00	58 NM	44.00	224 NM	3.00	50 F+	58.00	41 NM	4.00	123 VG+	3.00	38 F/VF	265.00
295 VG	55.00		321 NM	7.00	245 NM	3.00	472 NM	3.00	143 NM	3.00	59 NM	45.00	59 NM	45.00	225 NM	3.00	51 F+	59.00	42 NM	4.00	124 VG+	3.00	39 F/VF	270.00
296 VG	55.00		322 NM	7.00	246 NM	3.00	473 NM	3.00	144 NM	3.00	60 NM	46.00	60 NM	46.00	226 NM	3.00	52 F+	60.00	43 NM	4.00	125 VG+	3.00	40 F/VF	275.00
297 VG	55.00		323 NM	7.00	247 NM	3.00	474 NM	3.00	145 NM	3.00	61 NM	47.00	61 NM	47.00	227 NM	3.00	53 F+	61.00	44 NM	4.00	126 VG+	3.00	41 F/VF	280.00
298 VG	55.00		324 NM	7.00	248 NM	3.00	475 NM	3.00	146 NM	3.00	62 NM	48.00	62 NM	48.00	228 NM	3.00	54 F+	62.00	45 NM	4.00	127 VG+	3.00	42 F/VF	285.00
299 VG	55.00		325 NM	7.00	249 NM	3.00	476 NM	3.00	147 NM	3.00	63 NM	49.00	63 NM	49.00	229 NM	3.00	55 F+	63.00	46 NM	4.00	128 VG+	3.00	43 F/VF	290.00
300 VG	55.00		326 NM	7.00	250 NM	3.00	477 NM	3.00	148 NM	3.00	64 NM	50.00	64 NM	50.00	230 NM	3.00	56 F+	64.00	47 NM	4.00	129 VG+	3.00	44 F/VF	295.00
301 VG	55.00		327 NM	7.00	251 NM	3.00	478 NM	3.00	149 NM	3.00	65 NM	51.00	65 NM	51.00	231 NM	3.00	57 F+	65.00	48 NM	4.00	130 VG+	3.00	45 F/VF	300.00
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307 VG	55.00		333 NM	7.00	257 NM	3.00	484 NM	3.00	155 NM	3.00	71 NM	57.00	71 NM	57.00	237 NM	3.00	63 F+	71.00	54 NM	4.00	136 VG+	3.00	51 F/VF	330.00
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62 VG+	8.00	61 F+	157 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	87 VG+	30.00	21 NM	16.00	2 NM	169 VF/NM	4.00	37 VF/NM	35.00	28 NM	5.00	169 VF/NM	4.00	38 VF/NM	35.00	28 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	76 NM	25.00
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68 F+	8.00	67 F+	163 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	93 VG+	30.00	27 NM	16.00	2 NM	175 VF/NM	4.00	43 VF/NM	35.00	34 NM	5.00	175 VF/NM	4.00	44 VF/NM	35.00	34 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	82 NM	25.00
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71 F+	8.00	70 F+	166 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	96 VG+	30.00	30 NM	16.00	2 NM	178 VF/NM	4.00	46 VF/NM	35.00	37 NM	5.00	178 VF/NM	4.00	47 VF/NM	35.00	37 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	85 NM	25.00
72 VG+	8.00	71 F+	167 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	97 VG+	30.00	31 NM	16.00	2 NM	179 VF/NM	4.00	47 VF/NM	35.00	38 NM	5.00	179 VF/NM	4.00	48 VF/NM	35.00	38 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	86 NM	25.00
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75 VG+	8.00	74 F+	170 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	100 VG+	30.00	34 NM	16.00	2 NM	182 VF/NM	4.00	50 VF/NM	35.00	41 NM	5.00	182 VF/NM	4.00	51 VF/NM	35.00	41 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	89 NM	25.00
76 F+	8.00	75 VG+	171 VF	15.00	8 NM	8.00	101 VG+	30.00	35 NM	16.00	2 NM	183 VF/NM	4.00	51 VF/NM	35.00	42 NM	5.00	183 VF/NM	4.00	52 VF/NM	35.00	42 NM	5.00	THREE	1 F+	15.00	90 NM	25.00
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There was no winner for our 37th Mystery Contest from CBG #1335. No one correctly identified the panel as coming from G.I. Combat #110 (Mar 65). If anyone had, they would have received a copy of Comic-Book Superstars. Keep those entries coming and keep watching for more contests in our pages.



30

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Aug 27-29 AZ, Phoenix. Collectibles Show, Civic Plaza. 225 E. Adams St., SH: Fri. 12noon-7pm, Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 70-8, F: \$175-\$295, A: \$6. per day. Show Promotions, Marc or Annie, PH: 480-945-5533.

CALIFORNIA

Aug 6-8 CA, Visalia. Comic Book & Toy Fest, Sequoia Mall. Mooney & Caldwell Ave., SH: Fri. 10am-9pm, Sat. 10am-8pm, Sun. 11am-6pm, T: 30-6, F: \$75, A: free. Cool Stuff Shows, 2330 W. Monte Vista, Visalia, CA 93277. PH: 559-307-4036.

Aug 8 CA, Los Angeles. Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention, Shrine Auditorium Expo Ctr. 700 W. 32nd St., SH: 10am-5pm, A: \$5. Bruce Schwartz, 2319-A W. Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91506. PH: 818-954-8432.

Aug 8 CA, Modesto. Comic Book & Toy Fest, Centre Plaza. 10th & K Sts., next to Double Tree Inn, SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 30-8, F: \$35, A: \$2, 6 & under free. Cool Stuff Shows, 2330 W. Monte Vista, Visalia, CA

93277. PH: 206-668-0821 or 559-215-0134.

Aug 12-15 CA, San Diego. Comic Con International, Convention Ctr. A: \$60, \$30. kids & seniors. Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112. PH: 619-544-9555 or 800-966-8929.

Aug 22 CA, San Francisco. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Cathedral Hill Hotel. 1101 Van Ness Ave. (at Geary Blvd.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, F: \$50, A: \$2. Al & Damon Jang, 3145 Geary Blvd. #270, San Francisco, CA 94118. PH: 415-386-9036.

Sep 3-6 CA, Fresno. Comic Book & Toy Fest, Manchester Center. Corner of Blackstone & Shields Ave., just off Hwy. 41, SH: Fri. 10am-9pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 11am-6pm, Mon. 10am-5pm, T: 20-8, F: \$75, A: free. Cool Stuff Shows, 2330 W. Monte Vista, Visalia, CA 93277. PH: 559-307-4036.

CONNECTICUT

Aug 7 CT, Meriden. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Masonic Temple. 112 E. Main St., SH: 9:30am-3pm, T: 30-8, F: \$25, A: \$9, under 12 free. Ernest Schaper, 10 McKenzie Ave., S. Meriden, CT 06451. PH: 203-634-0069.

Aug 8 CT, Enfield. Comic Book & Toy Convention, Harley Hotel. 1 Bright Meadow Blvd. (Exit 49 off I-91), SH: 9am-3pm, T: 50-8, F: \$45, for 1, \$85, for 2, \$115, for 3, A: \$99 per person. Matt's Sports Cards & Comics, PH: 860-741-2522.

Aug 29 CT, East Hartford. Comic Book Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Robert St. (Exit 58 off I-84), SH: 11am-5pm, T: 35, F: \$45, A: \$99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 206 Burnside Ave., E. Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208.

FLORIDA

Aug 15 FL, Largo. Comic Book & Toys TNT Collectible Show, Honeywell Minnreg Bldg. 6340-126th Ave. N., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 65, A: \$2. D. Walent, PO Box 82254, Tampa, FL 33682. PH: 813-932-0494.

GEORGIA

Aug 14-15 GA, Augusta. Augustacon 31, Comic Books & Gaming Convention, Southgate Shopping Ctr. 1631 Gordon Hwy., SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 12noon-6pm, T: 30-8, F: \$75, for 1, \$200, for 3, A: \$3. Paul Rogers, 1631 Gordon Hwy., Augusta, GA 30906. PH: 706-793-7796.

ILLINOIS

Aug 14 IL, Orland Park. Comic Book, Sports, Toys, NASCAR & Beanies Show, Civic Ctr. La Grange Rd. (Rt. 45) at 147th St., SH: 9am-3pm, T: 85-6, F: \$30, A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Aug 15 IL, Bridgeview. Comic Book & Toy Show, Oremus Center. 79th & Oketo (2 blks. W. of Harlem Ave.), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 8, F: \$25, A: \$1. Mike, PH: 708-788-7276 or Jim, PH: 815-886-8925.

Aug 22 IL, Orland Park. Comic Book, Sports, Toys, NASCAR & Beanies Show, Civic Ctr. La Grange Rd. (Rt. 45) at 147th St., SH: 9am-3pm, T: 85-6, F: \$30, A: \$1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

INDIANA

Aug 7 IN, Syracuse. Comics & Collectible Hobby Show, Scout Cabin. Indiana Hwy. 13, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 22, F: \$25-\$30, A: free. Gene Haberstick, PO Box 908, Goshen, IN 46527. PH: 219-533-1887.

Aug 8 IN, Indianapolis. Comic Book, Toy & Animation Show, Holiday Inn East. 21st & Shadeland (Shadeland Ave. Exit of I-70 or I-465), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60, F: \$70, A: \$4, 9 & under free. Andy & Diane Holzman, 1947 Bechtel Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46260. PH: 317-334-0173 or 824-9602.

Aug 14-15 IN, South Bend. Comics & Collectible Hobby Show, Scottsdale Mall. Ireland at Miami, SH: Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 60, F: \$80-\$90, A: free. Gene Haberstick, PO Box 908, Goshen, IN 46527. PH: 219-533-1887.

Aug 28-29 IN, Elkhart. Collectible Show, Pierre Moran Mall. 154-40C West Hively Ave., T: 50, F: \$70, A: free. Dave Brody, PO Box 724, South Bend, IN 46601. PH: 219-272-9198.

Aug 20-22 IN, Hammond. Comics & Collectible Hobby Show, Woodmar Mall. Indianapolis Blvd. at 165th St., SH: Fri. 10am-9pm, Sat. 10am-5:30pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 60, F: \$80-\$90, A: free. Gene Haberstick, PO Box 908, Goshen, IN 46527. PH: 219-533-1887.

Aug 28-29 IN, Goshen. Comics & Collectible Hobby Show, Inn. US 33, SH: 10am-6pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 30, F: \$40, A: free. Gene Haberstick, PO Box 908, Goshen, IN 46527. PH: 219-533-1887.

Sep 4-5 IN, Warsaw. Comic Book & Collectible Hobby Show, Kosciuszko City Fairgrounds. South St. easy access from Ind. 15 or US 30, SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 40, F: \$55, A: free. Gene Haberstick, PO Box 908, Goshen, IN 46527. PH: 219-533-1887.

KENTUCKY

Aug 13-15 KY, Ashland. Comic Book, Sports Card & Racing Coll. Show, Town Center. 500 Winchester Ave., SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun.

(Continues on Page 70)

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"Asking a working writer what he thinks about critics is like asking a lamp-post how it feels about dogs."

— Christopher Hampton

Reviews is what my editors have asked for this week, so that's what they and you are getting. I'm working on my "plays well with others" merit badge.



"If a reader enjoys these comics — and the breathtaking Manning art virtually insures that he will — he will likely enjoy the novels themselves."



As Disney's *Tarzan* swings across movie screens near and far, Dark Horse celebrates an earlier and much-beloved "animated" version of the classic character with its publication of **Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes*** (\$12.95) and **Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*** (\$10.95). Under gorgeous Frazetta-inspired covers by Mark Schultz, these trade paperbacks collect several of the comic-book adaptations of Tarzan novels published by Western Publishing's Gold Key Comics in the 1960s. The novels were adapted by artist Russ Manning and scripted by Gaylord DuBois, one of the most prolific comics writers of all time.

"Legendary artist" is the description given the late Manning in a bio page that appears in each of the books and it's a well-deserved sobriquet. Manning had a long association with Tarzan. He adapted 10 of the Burroughs novels for Gold Key; drew many issues of the best-selling *Korak*, *Son of Tarzan* spin-off, as well as the popular "Brothers of the Spear" back-up feature in *Tarzan*; and wrote and drew the *Tarzan* newspaper strip for many years. He also drew (and sometimes wrote) *Magnus: Robot Fighter* and launched the *Star Wars* comic strip. In recognition of the guidance and inspiration Manning gave to a generation of artists and writers, the San Diego-based Comic-on International presents the "Russ Manning Award" to the most promising new talent of the year.

Tarzan of the Apes presents "condensed" versions of four of Burroughs' Tarzan novels: *Tarzan of the Apes*, *The Return of Tarzan*, *The Beasts of Tarzan*, and *The Son of Tarzan*. Running a mere 24 pages apiece and created with Gold Key's young audience in mind, these versions are still a fine introduction to the original works. If a reader enjoys these comics — and the breathtaking Manning art virtually insures that he will — he will likely enjoy the novels themselves. If I could squeeze an eighth

A sextet of swinging reviews

day into the week, I'd be re-reading them right now.

Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar was adapted over three issues of the Gold Key series and benefits greatly from the 72 pages with which Manning and DuBois had to work. It's a complicated tale of amnesia, jungle raiders, lost civilizations, presumed deaths, and smoldering passion. Trade in Tarzan's loin cloth for an Armani suit, and this tale could be the most exciting television soap opera of all time. If you don't keep count of the coincidences — and that would certainly be my recommendation — *Jewels of Opar* is great fun. I got a kick out of it.

Both of these books are suitable for readers of all ages. So are the original Tarzan novels, though you might want to have a word with younger readers about the times in which they were originally written.

Fans of Steve Ditko — and that should be all of you — will want to check out *Ditkomania*, the fanzine-newsletter published by Bill Hall. *Ditkomania* #62 (June 99; 85¢) has an original cover of The Face and Howling Commando Gabe Jones by Dick Ayers, a checklist of Ayers-Ditko collaborations, an article by Will Murray discussing the retelling of Spider-Man's first meeting with The Fantastic Four from the first *Fantastic Four Annual*, a piece tracking *Overstreet* prices for *Daring Love* #1 (considered by many comics historians to be Ditko's first published work) from 1974 to the present, and other assorted factoids on Ditko's career. For subscription information, you can contact the publisher at: Bill Hall, 556 Main St., Cromwell, CT 06416.

Remember: Miss Manners says you should always include a stamped, self-addressed envelope when you're sending a query to one of your fellow comics readers.

That Kurt Busiek and George Pérez' *Avengers* is only Marvel's second-best super-team series speaks volumes about the Kurt Busiek and Mark Bagley *Thunderbolts*. Pérez is the better artist, which is not to suggest for even a moment that Bagley isn't doing great work in *T-Bolts*, but *Avengers* comes in second — a close second — in the "anything can happen in this comic book" department. But, hey, why get so picky? For super-team fans, these are the best such titles currently on the stands.

Avengers #13 (\$1.99) saw Firestar and Justice reuniting with The New Warriors, their friends and former teammates. In previous issues, we've seen the young heroes struggling

with their new lives as Avengers. With this issue, Busiek and Pérez examine Justice's inner conflicts and, in doing so, make an already interesting hero even more so.

The curse of interesting conflicts (and times) is definitely a driving force in *Avengers*. The Scarlet Witch must deal with the newly discovered nature of her "hex" power, her relationships with Wonder Man and The Vision, and the leadership role she is assuming with the team. We also have the arrival of Lord Templar, a new foe with enough power to take on "Earth's Mightiest Heroes" and, if not beat them, then battle them to a draw.

The story continues in *Avengers* #14 with the arrival of Pagan, another new, incredibly powerful mystery villain. Busiek and Pérez break the fourth wall to herald a guest appearance by the bouncing Beast of X-Men fame. A rare night out on the town becomes somewhat more serious than anticipated, as The Beast becomes "Dear Abby" to a troubled Wonder Man. We even have a clash of leadership styles between Captain America and The Scarlet Witch.

In case you hadn't noticed, Busiek and Pérez put a whole lot of story into every issue. *Avengers* #15 has a free-for-all between our team, Pagan, Lord Templar, and Triathlon, the super-hero spokesperson for the Triune Understanding, a kind of New Age cult and/or religion. Just for good measure, Busiek and Pérez also set up the next two storylines for the title.

Jerry Ordway comes aboard for a three-issue stint as the guest writer and penciller for *Avengers* #16-18. The intensity is down a notch from the regular team, but Ordway and Editor Tom Brevoort do a great job bringing the readers a terrific yarn and keeping the subplots moving along nicely. They bring us The Doomsday Man and The Wrecking Crew; a crisis of confidence for Justice; guest shots by The Black Knight, Photon, and Warbird; a trip to the alternate world of Arkon and Thundra; intriguing scenes between Firestar and The Knight; and the yes-we-saw-it-coming-but-it's-still-really-exciting return of Ultron.

All in all, *Avengers* feels and reads like a comic book twice its size. For great art, stories, and value, it's one of the best bargains in comicdom.

I was going to add "don't miss an issue" to the above praise, but, unfortunately, I think you can and probably should give a pass to *Avengers* #99 (\$3.50), this year's annual. Writer John Francis Moore and artist Leonardo Manco start with a minor bit of

leftover business from "Onslaught" and "Heroes Reborn" — in which The Avengers and other heroes were sent to comic-book purgatory for a year — and try to make a story out of it. It plods along for 38 pages but never quite manages to excite or move the reader.

Unlike Ordway's story, which was smoothly integrated into the ongoing series, this annual had the feel of the Marvel inventory issues of the 1970s and 1980s. Some might be readable, a few might be very good, but, for the most part, they were never as good as what the regular creative team was producing. An annual should be something special; this one was a disappointment.

One more for the road. *Avengers Forever* (\$2.99 per issue) is a 12-issue limited series which, although I'm enjoying it a great deal, is not something I would recommend to the casual super-hero reader. The premise in as few words as I can manage is that Rick Jones is accessing an incredible power called the Destiny Force and this somehow threatens the state of reality preferred by Immortus and the Time-Keepers. A team of Avengers from the past, present, and future are trying to save their young friend's life and figure out what the heck is going on. Don't ask me for more details than that. We still have to fit some ads into this issue.

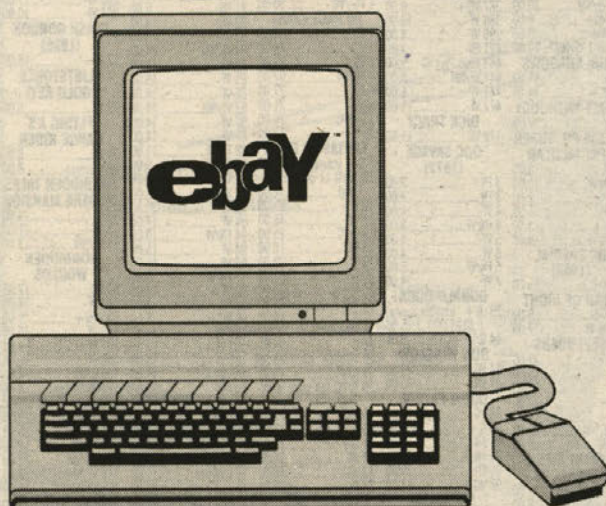
Since I've been reading Marvel comics since the early 1960s, I'm enjoying the way Kurt Busiek (co-plotter, scripter) and Roger Stern (co-plotter) are playing with Marvel universe history and all the fondly remembered characters who have been turning up in these issues. The Carlos Pacheco-Jesus Merino art is pretty sweet, too. OK, occasionally, the story does get bogged down, as Busiek and Stern fix some bit of mangled continuity — and, sadly, slows to a crawl in #8 — but it's huge fun for a veteran Marvelite like yours truly. And there's the rub.

If you're as crazy about the Marvels of the 1960s through the 1980s as I am — let's face it; the 1990s have been largely an off-decade for the Marvel heroes — I think you'll get a big kick out of *Avengers Forever*. However, if you're a casual reader, I think you're going to get lost in the details. You know which category you fit into; let that guide you.

I'll be back next week with more reviews.

Send comments on and review items for this column to: Tony's Tips!, P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. You can also e-mail Tony at: tonyisa@ohio.net

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312 G/VG	4.00	366 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		50 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		34 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		37 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		84 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		84 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		73 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
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315 G/VG	4.00	369 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		53 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		37 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		40 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		87 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		87 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		76 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
316 G/VG	4.00	370 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		54 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		38 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		41 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		88 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		88 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		77 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
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333 G/VG	4.00	387 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		71 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		55 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		58 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		105 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		105 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		94 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
334 G/VG	4.00	388 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		72 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		56 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		59 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		106 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		106 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		95 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
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343 G/VG	4.00	397 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		81 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		65 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		68 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		115 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		115 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		104 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
344 G/VG	4.00	398 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		82 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		66 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		69 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		116 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		116 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		105 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
345 G/VG	4.00	399 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		83 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		67 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		70 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		117 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		117 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		106 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
346 G/VG	4.00	400 FN/VF 5.00	AMAZING ADVENTURES (1961)		84 FN+ 50.00	ARCHIE		68 VG 8.00	THE CAT (1972)		71 FN 3.00	BOY COMICS		118 VF+ 8.00	CRISIS (1985)		118 VF+ 8.00	DOOM PATROL		107 VF+ 23.00	FLASH		1 G/VG 4.00	FRANKENSTEIN		129 FN/VF 9.00	G.I. JOE (ZIFF-DAVIS)		129 FN/VF 9.00
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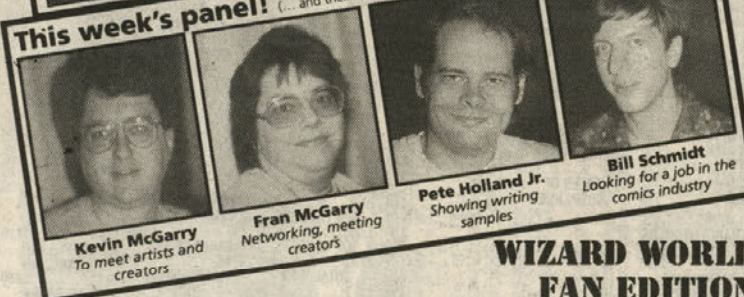
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(DC, 1958)	14 VF	75.00	15 VF	15.00	51 FN	24.00	47 FN	3.00	5 FN	60.00	63 FN	7.00	5.00	27.00	146 FN	7.00	8 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	22 NM	12.00	36 VG	7.00	120 VG	17.00
54 FN	25.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	53 FN	35.00	48 FN	3.00	5 FN	135.00	64 FN	7.00	8 FN	18.00	148 FN	14.00	9 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	23 NM	15.00	37 VG	8.00	121 VG	20.00
HENRY ALDRICH	2 VF	28.00	15 VF	15.00	54 FN	18.00	49 FN	3.00	5 FN	115.00	65 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	151 FN	14.00	10 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	24 NM	12.00	38 VG	9.00	122 VG	20.00
12 G	2.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	55 FN	14.00	50 FN	3.00	5 FN	120.00	66 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	152 FN	14.00	11 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	25 NM	15.00	39 VG	10.00	123 VG	20.00
18 G	3.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	56 FN	10.00	51 FN	3.00	5 FN	125.00	67 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	153 FN	14.00	12 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	26 NM	12.00	40 VG	11.00	124 VG	20.00
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1 FN	40.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	58 FN	18.00	53 FN	3.00	5 FN	135.00	69 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	155 FN	14.00	14 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	28 NM	12.00	42 VG	13.00	126 VG	20.00
3 VF	80.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	59 FN	15.00	54 FN	3.00	5 FN	140.00	70 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	156 FN	14.00	15 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	29 NM	15.00	43 VG	14.00	127 VG	20.00
4 VF (pulled staple)	3.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	60 FN	12.00	55 FN	3.00	5 FN	145.00	71 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	157 FN	14.00	16 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	30 NM	12.00	44 VG	15.00	128 VG	20.00
6 VG	32.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	61 FN	8.00	56 FN	3.00	5 FN	150.00	72 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	158 FN	14.00	17 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	31 NM	15.00	45 VG	16.00	129 VG	20.00
7 VF	48.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	62 FN	12.00	57 FN	3.00	5 FN	155.00	73 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	159 FN	14.00	18 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	32 NM	12.00	46 VG	17.00	130 VG	20.00
8 VF	80.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	63 FN	10.00	58 FN	3.00	5 FN	160.00	74 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	160 FN	14.00	19 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	33 NM	15.00	47 VG	18.00	131 VG	20.00
9 VF	60.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	64 FN	8.00	59 FN	3.00	5 FN	165.00	75 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	161 FN	14.00	20 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	34 NM	12.00	48 VG	19.00	132 VG	20.00
10 FN	75.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	65 FN	12.00	60 FN	3.00	5 FN	170.00	76 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	162 FN	14.00	21 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	35 NM	15.00	49 VG	20.00	133 VG	20.00
11 FN	50.00	IRON MAN	1 G	JUSTICE LEAGUE	66 FN	10.00	61 FN	3.00	5 FN	175.00	77 FN	7.00	8 FN	11.00	163 FN	14.00	22 FN	7.00	TEEN TITANS	36 NM	12.00	50 VG	21.00	134 VG	20.00
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the comics PANEL

This week's panel! (... and their reason for attending Wizard World Chicago.)



Kevin McGarry
To meet artists and
creators

Fran McGarry
Networking, meeting
creators

Pete Holland Jr.
Showing writing
samples

Bill Schmidt
Looking for a job in the
comics industry

WIZARD WORLD FAN EDITION

A round-robin review of some of today's noteworthy comic books!
Panel compiled and conducted by Brent Frankenhoff

Wild Thing #1

Marvel, 32 pages, color, \$1.99

As a result of a fan poll in the "M2" comics, Wolverine's daughter gets her own series. Writer Larry Hama and penciller Ron Lim present Rina's first day at her new school, a day in which she has to decide whether or not she really wants to be a hero. **Reviewed from photocopies. Available Aug. 4**

MY DAD IS
WOLVERINE
AND MY MOM IS
ELEKTRA...

... BUT I'M JUST
A SOPH WHO
ISN'T IN WITH
THE RIGHT
CLIQUE.



Fran: Out of all the items for review, this will be the easiest one to attract fans. It's got the mutant angle and a female heroine. That's becoming really popular. This could be a sleeper hit that takes everybody by surprise. A strong, basic title. Grade: A.

Pete: This had a lot of heart and I liked it. Rina has a lot of character. Wolverine shows up at the end and demonstrates that he really cares for his daughter. This shows real emotions and real people. Grade: B+.

Bill: While this has promise, it's not gripping enough for a first issue and it could have been half the length. The story was clichéd and not impressive, but the series has potential. The Thrash Bandit turned me off. Grade: C+.

Kevin: The target audience will enjoy this, especially fans of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Young Justice*, but I don't see older readers following it. The art was decent and the story was good, if stereotypical with the standard "female in distress" motif. Grade: C+.

Panel's grade: **B**

Toon Warz: Episode 1/2 The Fandom Menace

Sirius, 24 pages, b/w, \$2.95

Akiko's Mark Crilley provides four alternate covers for the Fillbach Brothers' send-up of this summer's biggest movie. **Reviewed from photocopies. Available now.**

Pete: This was my personal favorite and a very funny parody. I spent a lot of time examining the background for items I had missed. The sequence with the line outside the theater was a stitch, in a comic book with lots of gags. I will buy this when it comes out. Grade: A-.

Bill: The dialogue was funny, but the art was crude. It resembled a *Mad* parody in some ways. While it doesn't transcend its source material, it was my favorite of this review lot. Grade: B+.

Kevin: This was the best of the group. The Sergio Aragones-type artwork was great. Many of the jokes were aimed at movie buffs who had seen other work by the *Star Wars* actors, including *Rob Roy*. Overall, it was a laugh-out-loud story. Grade: A.

Fran: *Groo* fans will love this. It was fun reading. The back-

ground material really added to the experience. Grade: B+.

Panel's grade: **A-**



Battlestar Galactica Season III #1

Realm, 32 pages, color, \$2.99

Realm Press returns to its licensed series with this latest installment by James Kuhoric and Chris Scalf in which the Cylons haven't been spotted in more than six months. While Adama and his crew want to continue searching for Earth, the council moves to colonize a nearby habitable world. **Available now.**

Kevin: As a big *Battlestar Galactica* fan, I enjoyed this. The painted art is quite good, and the cityscape is really good. The series could use



a "what went before" for new readers and those who need to be brought up to speed on what *Galactica* is. Grade: B-.

Fran: This will keep the fans of the TV series and the earlier comics series but won't attract any new fans. I agree that a recap would help. Where is this set in relation to the series? Grade: C.

Pete: The biggest problem was the art; it's not expressive. It was hard to tell who was who. The characters needed sharper relief. However, I want to see what happens next. Grade: C-.

Bill: Recommended for diehard fans only. The art and writing need polishing and the art needs to be consistent. While some of the art is detailed, some is very sketchy. The writer needs to test the dialogue by reading it aloud. Background information to get the reader into the story is needed. I don't remember many details of the original series, and a new reader needs help to get into the story. Grade: B.

Panel's grade: **C+**



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C+ Comics Fan sees some potential in these titles but isn't all that sure they're worth buying yet. Work on the story or art may help some — others may need to escape looking routine.



D+ There might have been a good idea here once, but Comics Fan can't find it. While a few titles may be worth revisiting, creators of the others might mistake that for encouragement.



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"Maybe...Maybe Not Again!" by Ralf König

The long-awaited sequel to **"Maybe...Maybe Not"**! 120 pages for \$14.95 from Ignite! Entertainment Corp., P.O. Box 2273, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

Fantastic Five #1

Marvel, 32 pages, color, \$1.99

The other winner of the "Majority Rules" fan poll, *Fantastic Five* reunites the *Fantastic Four* creative team of Tom DeFalco and Paul Ryan and introduces a new team comprising The Human Torch, The Thing, Ms. Fantastic, Psilord, and Big Brain. **Reviewed from photocopies, available Aug. 18.**



Bill: While the villain had some originality, this felt like a continuation of DeFalco and Ryan's run on *Fantastic Four*.

It had some of the same old super-heroes but it was fun. Grade: **B+**.

Kevin: The art was good. As a *Fantastic Four* fan for years, I enjoyed it and can't wait to see it in color.

A good continuance of the *Fantastic Four* story with a surprise ending. Grade: **B**.

Fran: This will appeal to *Fantastic Four* fans but won't attract new readers.

It's not a bad story, but there's not enough attraction for continued reading. Grade: **B**.

Pete: This was perfectly adequate with a typical plot. The heroes and villains were standard. I don't see where there was a need for this series — or why there was a need for a *Fantastic Five*. Grade: **C-**.

Panel's grade: **B-**

The Broccoli Agenda

Sleeping Giant, 96 pages, b/w, \$7.95

Creator David Yurkovich presents an extra-long installment of his independent super-hero-mystery story. **Reviewed from photocopies, available Nov. 15.**

Kevin: This was my least favorite of the group. It wasn't my cup of tea. If I saw the word broccoli one more time, I was going to scream. It wasn't my style of art or writing and it's not made for the mainstream. Grade: **D**.

Fran: This is too expensive for a black-and-white comic book. While Yurkovich has a following, this is not for the mainstream, only for the fans on the fringe. It's not badly written, but I had to force myself to finish it, thinking, "When will it end?" Grade: **D**.

Pete: I enjoyed it, especially the three-panel layout that gave it a letterboxed quality that was very nice. This is geared for mystery buffs but needs focus. Where did the super-hero angle come from? It should be chopped out. Grade: **B-**.

Bill: This was the most offbeat and original of the group, but Yurkovich brought in too much extra material with the heroes. It's not realistic within its own world and the characters don't have depth. However, this is promising work and future issues are worth checking out. Grade: **B**.

Panel's grade: **B-**

BROCCOLI AGENDA

DAVID YURKOVICH

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Bob Burden: The Original Mystery Man



"They're the movie makers and I do the comic book — for me to come in and suggest changes would be like the director coming in and telling me how to do the comic book."

— Bob Burden



Bob Burden holds his giant pencil.

"For every successful hero who was belted by gamma rays, injected with magic ginseng or — for instance — bit by a radioactive spider like Spider-Man, there are many, many more who are not so spectacular."

— Bob Burden, in "Hey Kids! Meet The Mystery Men!" from *Flaming Carrot's Greatest Hits Vol. 3*

By Matt Brady

While they may seem downright normal in today's post-Tick, post-Madman world, where square-jawed heroes have lost a chunk of ground to heroes who don't take the game so seriously, The Mystery Men were a novelty when created by Bob Burden in 1987.

Sure, they were descendants of The Inferior Five and other nonsense super-hero groups created through the years, but, when The Mystery Men hit the scene in *Flaming Carrot Comics* #16 ("I Cloned Hitler's Feet!") they were a combination of two creative impulses, according to Burden.

"I came up with *Flaming Carrot* in 1979 and just had fun with it," Burden said. "It was just such an improbable, preposterous, ridiculous character — a Dadaist, real, fun character. *Flaming Carrot* became a cult hit, and the back issues still sell fairly well, but there was about zero chance of him catching on with anyone more than the small group of fans who read it. He was just too weird to get anything but mild and bemused interest from book publishers, movie studios, and girls in bars. I created The Mystery Men as a means to reinvent *Flaming Carrot* and revealed back in #16 that he was a member of the team from the early days."

Of the comics Burden spun off from *Flaming Carrot*, The Mystery Men caught on with a larger

cult following than *Flaming Carrot* had by himself, so Burden stuck with them. Since their inception, The Mystery Men have always been "second-string, milltown, blue-collar super-heroes: costumed adventurers who can't get into the big-time super-hero teams because they have the mediocre powers, unsightly or ridiculous costumes, behavioral problems, scandalous reputations, or severe character flaws," according to Burden.

And he never seriously thought they would be a movie.

"It's true that one of the thoughts I had about creating The Mystery Men when I did was that no one could do a movie based on *Flaming Carrot*, so I should create characters that would work," Burden said. "I'd had mild interest in The Mystery Men as a movie for almost 10 years, but it was Mike Richardson and Dark Horse — who'd seen movies like *The Mask* and *Timecop* to fruition — who saw *Mystery Men* as the next big Hollywood-comics tie-in. He personally took an interest in it and sold it to Universal. Mike, myself, and I think everybody at Dark Horse were surprised at the sale and how big a movie they wanted to make of it."

Writing the treatment.

While the studio loved the concept, Universal brought in Neil Cuthbert (*Hocus Pocus*) and Brent Forrester (*The Stupids*) to write an original screenplay



The Mystery Men's "origin" was recapped in *Flaming Carrot Comics* #26 (Jun 91).



based on Burden's characters. Not wanting to get into the context of *Flaming Carrot*, Cuthbert and Forrester created Captain Amazing, Champion City's version of Superman, who gets kidnapped by Casanova Frankenstein. Not knowing whom else to call, The Mystery Men are called in to save Captain Amazing and the day.

Burden, who didn't mind his small role in *The Mystery Men* production, explained that he acted as a consultant of sorts to the team — and that was about it. "Whenever they wanted me, I was there, but I didn't really want to get into the middle of it or ruin anything," Burden said. "They're the movie makers and I do the comic book — for me to come in and suggest changes would be like the director coming in and telling me how to do the comic book."

Where are Tayback and Borgnine? While the casting of the *Mystery Men* movie virtually guarantees a strong opening weekend, Burden says he's happy with the choice of actors, although they're not the cast he originally pictured.

"The Shoveler is a different version of what I did — he's not a fat, bald guy," Burden said. "Originally, as I visualized them, The Mystery Men were characters like Ernest Borgnine and Vic Tayback — all Mike Ditka-type guys. The only current star I could've seen as a Mystery Man would've been Steve Buscemi from *Fargo*."

"But I'm very happy with the cast as it stands. For the most part, they come off looking like these odd-looking characters — people that you'd see at Kmart. Normal people, not your typical square-jawed, classic super-heroes, which is what The Mystery Men are all about."

Burden is very clear about the grounding theme behind his Mystery Men and said he feels that it's made it to the movie. "The message of *The Mystery Men Comics* is 'each according to his nature,'" Burden said. "People have their nature and that's what they are. *The Mystery Men* is a departure from the standard 'morality play' inherent in comics and most everything else. They're fighting the bad guys because they are inherently evil or dangerous, not to punish them or teach them a lesson. The Mystery Men are not perfect characters, and it's not a perfect world. Life's not fair, but good men make it fair."

"Most adventure-action TV shows these days have become nothing more than propaganda. The message is 'do the right thing, and everything will turn out right.' But with *Mystery Men* it's like a gang war between a bunch of guys with hearts and a bunch of guys without hearts, and it's between only the 5% or 10% of the population that cares. The rest of the world is just looking on like a bunch of rubbernecks at an accident. The Mystery Men comics stories are, at times, a lot more serious and deep than your average comic book and, with luck, deeper than your usual comic-book movie."

With the fact that more than 30 Mystery Men have shown up in *Flaming Carrot* so far, Burden is sure there are already talks of *Mystery Men 2* in the works. "But as things go in Hollywood, I'll probably read about it here before I get a call," Burden said. "There are discussions about finally turning *Flaming Carrot* into a film as well as some other characters — *Invincible Man* and *Nifty Boy* is percolating right now. It's a little goofier than *The Mystery Men*, but that's all I've ever wanted to do in this business: have fun."

Who are The Mystery Men?

It's a cast that reads more like a who's who in Gen X Hollywood — an impressive ensemble for what Universal hopes will become a popular franchise.

Hank Azaria Blue Raja
Claire Forlani Monica
Janeane Garofalo The Bowler
Eddie Izzard Tony Pompadour
Greg Kinnear Captain Amazing
William H. Macy Shoveler

Kel Mitchell Invisible Boy
Lena Olin Dr. Anabel Leek
Paul Reubens The Spleen
Geoffrey Rush Casanova Frankenstein
Ben Stiller Mr. Furious
Wes Studi The Sphinx
Tom Waits Dr. Heller
Artie Lange Big Red
Lucas Meyers Citizen Kane
Jody Watley Disco Girl

NEXT ISSUE... THE MYSTERY MEN LAY OVER IN THE NEARBY TOWN OF WECOVINE, N.J....



Where to find your Mystery Men

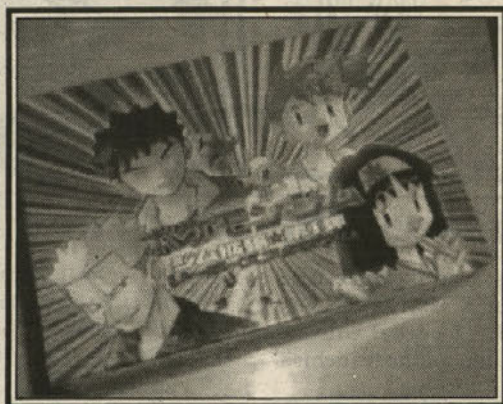
Dark Horse shipped both the first issue of *Mystery Men Movie Adaptation* and the first issue of *Bob Burden's Original Mystery Men* (featuring stories by Burden with art by Steve Sadowski and Chris McLaughlin) on July 21, and both should still be available. *BBO Mystery Men* #2 should be in stores Aug. 18.

The Mystery Men also appeared in *Flaming Carrot Comics* #16-#17 (reprinted in the Eisner-nominated *Flaming Carrot's Greatest Hits* Vol. 3 currently available from Dark Horse) and as a backup feature in the series, as well as a Mirage four-issue series.

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And much, much more !!!

Faraway LOOKS

a sideways glance at the world of comics

by JOHN JACKSON MILLER

CBG Managing Editor

aided and abetted by the intrepid MEREDITH



comics
newsline

Silly Daddy #20 is now available from Joe Chiappetta. The 32-page black-and-white digest, "heavily influenced by The Bible," is available for \$3 postpaid from 2209 Northgate Ave., North Riverside, IL 60546-1339.



Long Halloween veterans Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale team up for another 13-issue Batman maxi-series, **Dark Victory**, beginning in October.

Astronauts in Trouble: Live from the Moon, the mini-series by Larry Young, gets a 128-page trade paperback collection (including scripts and sketches) in October from PlanEtlar.

A moon, a comic book — and those darn kids today

"Hey, you wanna meet a guy who's walked on the moon?"

After a few days, Comic-Con International: San Diego can seem like La-La Land — there's Chekov walking over there, here comes Vampirella. Everyday stuff. But when a rep from **Pepper Pike Graphics** dropped the above question at the CBG booth in 1994 — it was just plain old San Diego Comic-Con then — well, that was new.

While I held the fort, **Maggie Thompson** trotted off to meet the astronaut in question, who was, to the best of both our recollections, **Pete Conrad**, the third man who walked on the moon (photo at left). NASA-wonk that I am, I've kicked myself for years for not in-



sisting to tag along — but I probably would've been kicking even if I had, remembering one technical question after another that I forgot to ask.

Conrad was promoting **Moon Shot: The Flight of Apollo 12**, a 40-page comic book written by D.C. Agle, drawn by **Alfredo Alcalá**, and colored by **Tom Luth**. It's an educational issue with a (sorry) retro style — a **Treasure Chest** for 1994. Alcalá brings out the lunar landscape with litho pencils, and, while Agle's story of the **Apollo 12** mission isn't as engaging as, say, HBO's *From the Earth to the Moon* on the same topic — there's lots of interviews and back-up features.

Sadly, the effort came in an imploding direct market, so few kids probably got to see it. Conrad's

death in a cycle accident July 9 prompted a second look at the issue, but the anniversary of **Apollo 11** might've moved me to it anyway. Conrad told Maggie one of his goals in participating was showing kids what hard work and cooperation could do.

So why don't the landings resonate more with those who weren't there? A caller to NPR theorized that "kids today" are unimpressed because they have no frame of reference — because Hollywood, with its lazy laws for the physical universe, provides virtual vistas that render reality mundane. It's true: Few SF film and TV vehicles have really bothered with the Moon since 2001 — a major exception, *Space: 1999*, hardly made it seem an appealing destination. Comics have made more use of the Moon — but, when every super-hero has a backyard spaceship, it can be hard for a kid to put the human effort in context. Can comics writers make our world more fantastic by making theirs less so?

Hostess® History Moment A fulfilling episode



Batman and Robin handed an early victory to the animal rights movement in 1977, when they taught Sable Lady where fur coats came from. The top-secret Twinkie filling formula, unfortunately, continued to evade the best efforts of the Batcave researchers.

Fans of sly cross-show references should catch 1991's final episode of *Dallas*, with its *It's a Wonderful Life* plot. Instead of leaving Dallas to inhabit CBS's Thursday night slot on *Knots Landing*, Gary Ewing winds up on the show directly opposite — *L.A. Law*, playing Corbin Bernsen's lascivious divorce attorney, more or less. The send-up even has its own version of the license-plate logo from the NBC series: UINGLAW.

At a comics shop near you...

Of reluctant heroes, no-shows, and co-stars

For your midsummer consumption:

Wyrd the Reluctant Warrior #14 Slave Labor
\$2.95, b/w, 24 pgs., each, July-Oct 1999

I like Jim Starlin. Have I mentioned that? *Dreadstar* remains a how-to text on comic-book space opera. The robot history lecture from *Gilgamesh II* #1 still renders me immobile with laughter. If he's writing it, I'm reading it.

That said, I shall now proceed to like his latest work. *Wyrd* delivers on the promise: The title hero is as reluctant as they come and could bolt for the exit at any minute. Not as ambitious as Starlin's earlier sagas — only the Earth hangs in the balance here — the six-issue series fuses a failed architect with mystical energy (and the personalities of 68 previous warriors) to battle the Nexus Combine. Nexus does hostile takeovers the old-fashioned way — with demons. *Wyrd*'s mouthy familiar, D'Jinn, may be less endearing than some other Starlin sidekicks, but there's no doubt that he keeps the dialogue moving.

PRO: Starlin as you like him...
CON: ...if you didn't prefer his subtler fare.
OVERALL: A-

Starlin's stories have often taken a sharp edge to such topics as the media, government, and religion: With age, Jim Starlin, like George Carlin, no longer bothers taking prisoners. *Wyrd* is palpably cynical about runaway capitalism, with Marvel financiers' names appearing in demonic incantations and crates of Viagra hidden beneath mega-executives' desks. Over-the-top is the order of the day here, so few will want Starlin to trade his machete for a scalpel; more are likely to bristle at the comedic handling of one of *Wyrd*'s embedded personalities — that of a gay man. But if you've got skin tough enough to survive the broad farce of, say, a Mel Brooks mo-



JLA #32
\$1.99, color, 32 pgs., Aug 1999

JLA #32 ostensibly explains why DC's main super-hero troupe hasn't come to the rescue of quarantined quake zone Gotham City. After reading it, I had to ask the Intrepid Meredith how, exactly, it did — so I guess you could say I didn't fully buy the answer. I doubt many outside threats could keep the *JLA* out of Gotham, and several of the members clearly aren't going to give two hoots in hell for any congressional ban while people are suffering.

But praise, nonetheless, to Mark Waid and Devin Grayson for daring to search for an escape route out of one of the bigger logical corners a comics line has painted itself into in some time. Thanks, as well, to Fred Hembeck for first writing of the problem in these pages: If you want the sales benefit of crossing characters between titles, fans are going to try to keep you honest.

PRO: Good value, topic overdue.
CON: Abandon-Gotham plot still abandons reality.
OVERALL: B

Puzzo about now. His Superman could un-quake this quake in about two minutes of screen time...

Star Wars: Episode I: Queen Amidala Dark Horse
\$2.95, color, 32 pp., Jul 1999

I examined out the first two of these, so let's finish the set. It sure seems like a long time since *The Phantom Menace* came out, but, in context, I doubt many thought we'd all be done discussing it quite as soon as we seem to be.

Queen Amidala sends the title character and Jar Jar Binks (remember, read Ben Stein's voice for him if you want to tolerate him) on an adventure across the wastes of Tatooine just before the pod races in *Phantom Menace*. Any story about chasing dragonflies is, of course, going to be a gentler story — and, while this bug hunt won't hold much interest for film fans looking for insight, it rollicks just enough to please the younger set.

PRO: Interlude suited for younger readers.
CON: If all life has value, what's Jar Jar gonna eat?
OVERALL: B-
You may be bugged, however, by a question writer Mark Shultz poses and leaves unanswered: where this Queen got to be such a hand with machinery. And I don't know why, but Jar Jar's cry of "noah bettery" put me in the mind of Jim Rockford's dad...

Star Wars: Episode I: Qui-Gon Jinn Dark Horse
\$2.95, color, 32 pp., Jul 1999

Finally, we get to the tie-in with some weight, based naturally on the weightiest character in the film: Qui-Gon Jinn, the man with the bubble-bath name no one can pronounce the same way twice. (When his and some other un-catchy names slipped out months ago, several hoped they were ringers to fool the Geek Nation. It's when they started showing up on merchandise that I started paring back my expectations.)

Qui-Gon visits a logical premise, a case of better's remorse involving Anakin's owner, Watto. While the physical action is perfunctory, writer Ryder Windham gives us some nice philosophical stylings from *Qui-Gon*. More importantly, there's a vital scene here that was cut from the film — Anakin, accused of cheating in the race, beats the stew out of one of his little pals. It's a scene that could've made the movie worthy of having Darth Vader's shadow in the poster (or his breath at the end of the credits). Instead, the cinematic face of future evil is 99.4/100% pure. Kudos to Dark Horse for getting the scene in somewhere.

PRO: *Qui-Gon* takes you away.
CON: Anakin tantrum should've made the film.
OVERALL: A-
And, boy, however awkwardly the filmmakers got at it, penciller Robert Teranshi really plugs into Christian imagery in spots here. The last couple of pages are in a serious "suffer the little Jedi come unto me" zone.



trivia
line

COMICS
POT-
POURRI
#1

Put on
your think-
ing cap for
these: ➤

1 What Flash writer was honored by having a street corner named after him in the *Flash* TV pilot?

2 While we're on the subject, what 1970s star played the Mirror Master on the series?

3 Last one: What relative of a *Flash* cast member was originally scheduled to portray Captain Cold?

4 Let's head back to radio. What element was introduced to the Superman radio series to give actor Bud Collyer a vacation?

5 What ACG comics character made an appearance in Bob Burden's *Flaming Carrot*?

6 In the *Rocketeer* novelization by Peter David, what comic book makes an appearance?

Rather than follow others by issuing variant covers on the same comic book, **Thinktank Comics** offers "two comics in one" in *Hysteria* #2. The issue, in stores now, tells the story of an investigation into killer bees from two different viewpoints, said creator Mike Hawthorne.

Genesis #1 is available from **Paradox Project** (838 Sibley, Augusta, GA 30901). The \$2.95 comics anthology features **Steve Rushbrook's** *Wolf* and **Sheldon Eastman** and **David Durand's** *Strike* 3.

The **Comic Book Profiles** tribute to **Archie Goodwin** is now available at comics shops. Proceeds from the issue from **As You Like It Productions** go to support a Goodwin scholarship at the **School of Visual Arts**.

Fans looking for more background to *The Victorian* can find a **Sourcebook** from **Penny Farthing Press** this November. It sells for \$2.

At a comics shop near you...

What goes several rounds, comes around

Here we go round the Marvel rack:

Contest of Champions II #1-2 Marvel
\$2.50, color, 32 pgs., Jul 1999

Maggie's off. The Golden Age isn't 12, it's 14. At least, that's how old I was when comics were publicly hep in my junior high — purchased by those who would constitute the "in" and "out" crowds alike. And one of the biggest tickets was the first in a wave of limited series from Marvel, an incredibly silly story called *Contest of Champions*. Mark Gruenwald (who else?), Bill Mantlo, and Steven Grant basically lined up a bunch of super-heroes and let them go at it. Token international heroes were invented for the event, several never to be seen again. (Although not Shamrock — I'll cop to being the supplier of that false info to Brent Frankenhoff back in issue #1313's "Triskaidekaphobia" feature. I suppose somebody wanted a challenge...)

The concept was a winner with our set, inspiring a single-elimination tournament for the entire Marvel universe that transpired in place of schoolwork — boy, were the guys horrified when all four finalists were female characters. Not to be overlooked was the contribution the two-page indexes of Marvel characters each issue made to the series — fan interest in them no doubt convinced someone



that *Official Handbooks* and *Who's Whos* could be a going concern in comics.

Here we are, 17 years later, with a sequel in name and spirit, but not in the particulars, which weren't that important in the first place. Crafty aliens have kidnapped super-heroes again and infested them with mind-altering microscopic "nanites." (Nanites here and in *JLA* #32, too! Did everybody see the same *Next Gen* episode?) With Marvel Online voters choosing one of the winners, you might expect a pretty lightweight story — but writers Chris Claremont and Oscar Jimenez have gone to

lengths to make this much better than it probably had to be. There's decent dialogue, Claremont makes good use of *X-Men* history (well, he oughta know), and some of the battles are right clever. Hulk versus Mr. Fantastic generated many laughs here.

PRO: Will please the nostalgic and the new.
CON: Four times more expensive than the original.

OVERALL: A

It's a pleasant surprise when an event such as this doesn't interfere with the action in the individual titles. It's a shock when a story grafted to a gimmick succeeds in its own right.

X-51 #1 Marvel
\$1.99, color, 32 pgs., Sep 1999

M-Tech title *X-51* brings back Machine Man, escapee from Marvel and Jack Kirby's attempt to make comics sense out of 2001 and star of his own pleasantly thought-provoking, if little-noticed, series from 1978-1981. (If publishers are really reviving Kirby characters in descending order of circulation, can the new title triumvirate of *Captain Victory*, *Devil Dinosaur*, and *The Dingbats of Danger Street* be far behind?) So, even if naming a main character Kubrick is a bit too cute, that's one in-joke I'd be happy for younger readers to get.

PRO: Nice-guy hero gets some attention.
CON: His head explodes.
OVERALL: B+

Human or not, Aaron "X-51" Stack was a nice guy — one of the few heroes you'd have as a neighbor. This issue is a good intro to him. But an over-the-top decapitation splash page breaks the mood, raising concern about the title's tone. If it's a grim-and-gritty Machine Man that's coming, leave him on the workbench...

Deathlok #1 Marvel
\$1.99, color, 32 pgs., Sep 1999

M-Tech also brings back *Deathlok*, the 1974 *Astonishing Tales* cyborg

whose alternate future 1990 is by now an alternate past — but not of "this" present. (Huh?) Set that aside: for M-Tech purposes, Joe Casey and Leonard Manco's *Deathlok* is another S.H.I.E.L.D. project of dubious legality gone amuck. Meanwhile, the cyborg's brain has found a home in the body of a six-year-old boy, to the worry, as you might expect, of his parents and teachers. You can hear the "CNN Breaking Story" cranking up now.

PRO: Kid angle puts new spin on crazed killer.
CON: Do we want kid angles on crazed killers?
OVERALL: B-

The art works, and there's some nice pop-cultural banter between D's hunters — Baa Baa *Black Sheep* is deep into my own trivial territory. (The grunt who saw it as *Black Sheep Squadron*, its final season title, is clearly a mere babe.) Not much else sticks with you after this preamble plays out, however. The internal dialogue that used to accompany *Deathlok* in the old days didn't always work, but this issue's device of running dictionary definitions to represent big D's thoughts wears thin after about the tenth one. I'm not sure it bodes well for a new series when its title character is brainless for the entire first issue. Verdict: Give *Deathlok* a second issue before calling that third strike.

(By the way, will somebody please remind whoever's doing the indicia that this is Volume 3 of *Deathlok* — not Volume 1? Some story is surely going to reference the earlier series one day, and "our other Volume 1" just won't sound like the expression of a company that's on top of things.)

Wolverine/Punisher Revelation #3 Marvel
\$2.99, color, 32 pgs., Aug 1999

Is it a revelation when you can pick up in the middle of a series — a limited one at that — and figure out what's going on? That used to be the least you could expect, but, somehow, once we got above 400 new comic books a month, it moved into the realm of a virtue worth recognizing. I thereby recognize it in *Wolverine/Punisher*, whose story of the two heroes tracking down a plague-causing girl begins as *in media res* as you can, yet becomes accessible to even expatriate Marvel readers after a few pages. Pat and Alvin Lee and Angelo Tsang supply an anime look that's surprisingly appropriate for a standard super-hero subway tunnel hunt.

PRO: Artwork will appeal to anime fans.
CON: Familiar characters in familiar story.
OVERALL: B

It's not quite what you'd expect of a three-dollar comic book, but the eventual collection should be a buy.

jump on



NEW READER QUICKSTART GUIDE

Three odd critters, cousins Fone, Smiley, and Phoney Bone, knock about in a forested valley filled with wonderful and terrifying creatures. A kid, Thorn, often helps.

RETURNING READER QUICKSTART GUIDE

(spoiler warning included)
If you've been away for the last...

FIVE YEARS Thorn learns she's the crown princess of Atheia and has power in her dreams. Rat Creatures relay the news to the Hooded One and the Lord of Locusts.

THREE YEARS Phoney pretends to be a Dragonslayer while plotting to steal the villagers' treasure. Fone and Smiley, returning a baby Rat Creature to the mountains, meet Rock Jaw, the mountain lion. Thorn finally accepts her destiny. Rat Creatures attack the valley.

ONE YEAR The villagers rally at Old Man's Cave. Thorn searches for Fone.

SIX MONTHS Gran'ma explains the history of the Hooded One and the Lord of Locusts. The Hooded One makes a pact with Rock Jaw. Rat Creatures attack Old Man's Cave. Thorn, Fone, and Smiley head toward Old Man's Cave with Rock Jaw in pursuit.

Current issue: #36

By the numbers

Hope Springs Eternal edition:

- 20%** The size of the drop in comics sales from 1993 to 1994.
- 39%** Percentage of retailers in late 1994 who predicted they'd be selling more comic books in 1995.
- 80%** Percentage of retailers in late 1994 who predicted they'd at least match their 1994 comics sales in 1995.
- 10% and 30%** Amount that comics sales overall ended up dropping over the course of 1995 and 1996 respectively.

Source: Comics Retailer Viewpoint Survey, Jan. 1996 issue.

Send your quips, quibbles, review copies, and cash to: **Faraway Looks, c/o CBG**, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990. E-mail to millerj@krause.com.

BACK-ISSUE BIN BAFFLERS

After seeing the note here in *CBG* #1339 on the *Fantastic Foursome* insert comic book in *Spy* magazine, an Alberta reader turned up a funnier one: *Those Surprising Gore Girls*, from *Spy*'s November 1993 issue.

"Livin' Large, Chillin' and Not Boring at All," the environmental adventures of the Second Family were illustrated by **Russ Heath**.



7 What character was in charge of Marvel's *Team America*?

8 What animated advertising character makes an appearance in Michael Jackson's *Moonwalker* movie?

9 Who did Peter Parker learn was dead at the end of *Amazing Spider-Man* #195?

10 What type of orbit did the *Justice League of America* satellite occupy?

11 Who drew *Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man* during Assistant Editor's month?

12 Which real politician became the thrall of the Serpent Crown in the Squadron's dimension?

13 What was the name of the super-hero, created by the Uni-Power, who could be anyone, including you?

Answers in right margin

POV

POINT OF VIEW

BY Mark EVANIER



The editors here told me I had to do reviews this week for their special "all-review" issue. I suggested I skip it, then come back next week and review the special "all-review" issue. They gave this idea a bad review.

Apart from my occasional Broadway appraisals which you all love so, I don't particularly enjoy writing reviews. Don't enjoy it and don't do it particularly well, as I am undoubtedly about to prove. So let the record show I have just given myself the only really bad review of this column.

My favorite super-hero comic book these days ...

is Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon*.

It's not that I don't come across comics and books I don't like. We have them piled floor-to-ceiling here at M.E. Manor. Last night, I read a recent Marvel which could probably pull the company out of bankruptcy, if they'd market it as an over-the-counter sleep-aid. Matter of fact, a few weeks ago, I devoted a whole evening to trying to "get current" on the top titles. It was the biggest waste of time since that night I spent at the Comedy



A few of my favorite things

Store, hitting on Ellen DeGeneres.

But, as I get older, the bad stuff seems to not stay with me. It goes in and out like you-know-what through a goose.

It wasn't always like that. There are comics I read 30, 35 years ago that have entered my cerebrum and taken up permanent residence. I can not only recall them vividly today, I can tell you who lettered them.

That comic book I read last night: I can't even tell you what it was about. I'm not sure I made it to the end.

So what follows are more on the order of recommendations than reviews.

And the first of these ain't a comic book and ain't even out yet ...

The Tip of the Freberg

One of my all-time heroes is comedian-satirist Stan Freberg. He was the foremost creator of spoof records in the '50s — admittedly, not a crowded category — and he later went on to become the world-class master of humorous commercials.

A generous sampling of all he's done can be had on *The Tip of the Freberg*, a boxed set coming your way in August from the fine folks at Rhino Records. It consists of four CDs plus a videocassette of Frebergian TV commercials and bits from television specials.

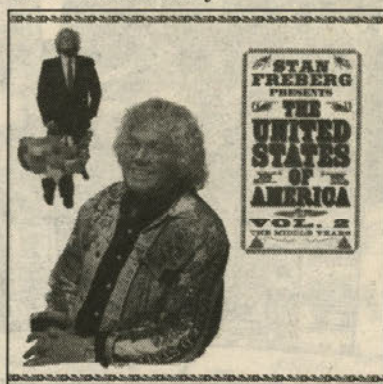
Stan asked me to sit in with him on some of the final mastering of the CD set, so I can report that it's chock-full o' treasures — though, frankly, it would have to be. The man doesn't have enough bad stuff to fill one CD, let alone four.

These four contain selections from his comedy records, his radio shows, and his radio commercials. The last are a special treat, as they've never been available before on commercial recordings. Most of his parody records have been on CD before but two, recorded back in the '50s, have never been released in any form, not even on vinyl.

Stan did burlesques of then-current records and TV shows. His rendition of "Heartbreak Hotel" was probably the first-ever imitation/spoof of Elvis Presley and, with "St. George and the Dragonet," he and his frequent co-conspirator — the legendary Daws Butler — did a rip on Jack Webb's *Dragnet*. The latter actually shot to #1 on the charts for a brief time, as did a few of Stan's other

records.

A parody record in the Numero Uno slot? I don't know the last time that happened, unless we're counting McCartney's last few. It was a little more common in the '50s — but not very.



What's even more amazing was that "St. George" even managed to crack the Top Ten in Australia at a time when *Dragnet* had yet to be broadcast there! That's right: a hit record parodying a show that the buying public had never heard of. As Stan probably said, "It's hard to be a satirist in a world where things like that happen."

Anyway, all his parodies — the Presley, *Dragnet*, his hysterical take-off of Lawrence Welk, many others — were done with the consent (sometimes, grudging) of the subject. Two targets, however, withheld permission, and those records, though fully produced and recorded, have been languishing unheard in the Capitol Records vaults for 40+ years.

One was a send-up of Arthur Godfrey, who was then a grand monarch of the radio-TV airwaves. It's hard now to understand why, but he was — and it sure wasn't because of a splendid sense of humor. He wouldn't let Capitol release "That's Right, Arthur," which drilled perhaps a bit deep in depicting the sycophancy he demanded of his on-air family. But Godfrey's dead now, and someone found the masters ... so it's in the boxed set.

Similarly, when Freberg and Butler did "The Worst of the Town," with Daws performing perhaps the world's first Ed Sullivan imitation, Ed was not amused. The Great Stoneface, as some called him, would soon come to appreciate the selflessness and self-promotion of being imitated and would encourage darn near every comedian on his show to do so. But his veto at the time consigned the Freberg-Butler effort to the vaults, from which it has now been res-

cued.

These are but two of the treasures on *The Tip of the Freberg*, and it has my highest recommendation.

And while we're at it: Your Complete Freberg Library ought to include the two-CD edition of *Stan Freberg Presents the United States of America* (also on the Rhino label) and two sets of *The Stan Freberg Radio Show* (volumes 1 and 2) which are from the Radio Spirits-Smithsonian operation. There are a few other "best of" CDs out, but, if you buy the new boxed set, you'll get everything that's on them.

OK, let's read some comics ...

Comic books

My favorite super-hero comic book these days, for both writing and art, is Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon*.



It is a comic book that is delightfully single-minded in its approach to its characters and the world in which they dwell. If you didn't know from the credits, I suspect you could read a batch and just sense that there is but one brain in command of this book — and a very warped and creative brain it is, too.

Erik's concept of human anatomy may well turn a few folks away. A friend of mine grouches it's not "realistic" — which, to me, is not an apt objection for comic book art. It's like complaining that Smash Mouth doesn't play soothing elevator music. In any case, what Erik does seems all quite deliberate, and it works in service of his stories, which afford a new twist and insight into the kind of character who can smash through walls.

(Continued on Page 64)

GEEZ, I'VE ALWAYS LOVED MUSIC -- ALMOST AS MUCH AS COMICS, IN FACT! I'VE ALWAYS HAD A HANKERING TO PEN SOME TUNE REVIEWS, BUT SINCE THIS IS *COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE* AND NOT *GOLDMINE*, THE ONLY WAY I COULD MAKE THIS LITTLE FANTASY OF MINE WORK WAS TO FOCUS ON SOME COMICS-RELATED CDS. TO WIT--

SUPERMAN: THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION FEATURES ALL-NEW DIGITAL RECORDINGS OF ORCHESTRAL VERSIONS OF SOME OF THE MAN OF STEEL'S GREATEST MUSICAL THEMES. THAT'S RIGHT--SOME. THE TITLE IS A MISNOMER. THE GEORGE REEVES TVER IS HERE, SOUNDING SWEET AWASH WITH SYMPHONIC POMP, AND KEY THEMES FROM THE FLEISCHER CARTOON AND COLUMBIA SERIAL ARE NICELY REPRESENTED, AS IS MORE CONTEMPORARY MATERIAL FROM THE INITIAL THREE FILMS AND *SUPERGIRL*--WHY, THERE'S EVEN TWO SEQUENCES FROM THE SIXTIES BROADWAY MUSICAL--BUT SINCE THE CD CLOCKS IN AT 55:23, MY QUESTION IS, WHERE'S LOIS AND CLARK, THE SYNDICATED SUPERBOY, THE RADIO SHOW, THE RECENT WB CARTOON, THE ANIMATED SATURDAY MORNING VERSION FROM THE LATE EIGHTIES--HECK, THERE WAS TIME ENOUGH TO INCLUDE ALL THESE AND SUPER FRIENDS, TOO!! WHAT THERE IS, IS FINE, BUT WHAT THERE ISN'T IS WHAT KEEPS IT FROM TRULY BEING ULTIMATE, SO I COULDN'T HELP BEING A BIT DISAPPOINTED AT AN OPPORTUNITY MISSED.

FULLY SIX OF THE SIXTEEN TRACKS FOUND ON THE SO-CALLED ULTIMATE COLLECTION ARE CULLED FROM JOHN WILLIAMS' MASTERFUL SCORE FOR *SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE*, BUT IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN HEARING THE WHOLE KITN KABOODLE, THERE'S A RECENT DOUBLE DISC FROM THE ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY JOHN DEBNEY WHICH BOASTS THE MOST COMPLETE RECORDING OF THAT SEMINAL WORK CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. TRUE TO FIT WHAT WAS ONCE A TWO-RECORD SET (REMEMBER THEM?), A PAIR OF TRACKS HAD TO BE DROPPED SO AS TO SQUEAK INTO COMPACT DISC TIME PARAMETERS WHEN THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK MADE THE FORMAT TRANSITION. HOWEVER, FOR ALL THE FOOFERAW THE LINER NOTES MAKE ABOUT RECOVERING LOST BITS OF ORCHESTRATIONS, THE DUO CDS ADD UP TO ONLY 82:23 MINUTES OF MUSIC, MAKING THE EXPANSION LESS EXCITING THAN THE STICKER ON THE JEWEL BOX MIGHT HAVE YOU BELIEVE. IF YOU REALLY MISS THE SELECTIONS "GROWING UP" AND "LEX LUTHOR'S LAIR"--HERE KNOWN AS "TO THE LAIR"--BUY THE SCOTTISH ORCHESTRA SET. OTHERWISE, YOU MAY AS WELL STICK TO THE JOHN WILLIAMS ORIGINAL, AS ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO ARE MINIMAL--THERE ARE NO BAGPIPE SOLOS, FOR INSTANCE. I'LL ADMIT TO NOT REALLY BEING MUCH OF A FILM SCORE BUFF, BUT IF THERE'S AN EXCEPTION TO THAT RULE, THIS IS IT: I LOVE THIS MUSIC, AND RECOMMEND EVERYONE OWN A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK, AND WHILE THIS NEW RECORDING IS BY NO MEANS A NECESSITY, SUPERMAN COMPLETISTS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY SQUANDERED THEIR CASH IN FAR MORE FOOLISH WAYS.

JAN AND DEAN MEET BATMAN, A 1966 CONCEPT ALBUM BY THE SURFER DUO, WAS PAIRED WITH **COMMAND PERFORMANCE: LIVE IN PERSON** TO COMPOSE A TWO-RECORD SET. ONE WAY RECORDS BACK IN 1996, AND PLEASE UNDERSTAND THIS: I BOW TO NO ONE IN MY ADMIRATION FOR WHAT PRINCIPAL BEACH BOY BRIAN WILSON ACHIEVED WITH BOTH HIS OWN GROUP AND WORKING WITH JAN AND DEAN BACK IN THOSE HALCYON DAYS OF THE SIXTIES, BUT FOLKS, BRIAN MUST'VE BEEN OUT GETTING A SANDWICH--OR TWO--WHEN HIS BUDDIES

THE SURFER DUO, WAS PAIRED WITH **COMMAND PERFORMANCE: LIVE IN PERSON** TO COMPOSE A TWO-RECORD SET. ONE WAY RECORDS BACK IN 1996, AND PLEASE UNDERSTAND THIS: I BOW TO NO ONE IN MY ADMIRATION FOR WHAT PRINCIPAL BEACH BOY BRIAN WILSON ACHIEVED WITH BOTH HIS OWN GROUP AND WORKING WITH JAN AND DEAN BACK IN THOSE HALCYON DAYS OF THE SIXTIES, BUT FOLKS, BRIAN MUST'VE BEEN OUT GETTING A SANDWICH--OR TWO--WHEN HIS BUDDIES

AND IF YOU LIKE HEARING THE SAME SONG OVER AND OVER, BE ADVISED YOU CAN FIND VERSIONS OF THAT BATMAN THEME IN PLENTY OF OTHER PLACES. IN MY COLLECTION ALONE, I'VE LOCATED A LOUD, STRAIGHT AHEAD TAKE ON THE EXPANDED CD OF THE WHO'S SECOND ALBUM, "A QUICK ONE", A GARAGE ROCK RAVE UP BY THE STANDELLS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THEIR GREATEST HIT, "DIRTY WATER", A GUITAR DRIVEN VENTURES VERSION FROM "THE VENTURES PERFORM THE GREAT TV THEMES" AND THE KINKS INCLUDED IT AS PART OF A MEDLEY (ALONG WITH "MILK AND BONES" AND "TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU") ON THEIR SIXTIES CONCERT SOUVENIR, "LIVE AT KEVIN HALL". ADDITIONALLY, THE ACTUAL TV THEME CAN BE FOUND ON THE INITIAL TV TOON COMPILATION, "TELEVISION'S GREATEST HITS" (WHICH, I SHOULD MENTION, ALSO HOUSES THE ORIGINAL GEORGE REEVES THEME. LOIS AND CLARK'S TURNS UP ON "CABLE READY", THE SEVENTH VOLUME OF "TELEVISION'S GREATEST HITS". NO SIGN OF THAT SUPERBOY THEME, THOUGH...)

CAPED CRUSADER COMPLETISTS WILL HAVE TO OWN BATMANIA SONGS INSPIRED BY THE BATMAN TV SERIES, AN ODD BALL COMPILATION OF RECORDINGS GENERATED BY THE OVERWHELMING SUCCESS OF THAT POP-ART SIXTIES BENCHMARK. MOST ARE THE SAME VINTAGE AS THE BILL DOZIER PRODUCED PROGRAM, THOUGH ADAM WEST IS REPRESENTED BY TWO TRACKS LAID DOWN IN 1976, IN HOPES OF CASHING IN ON HIS ENDURING ASSOCIATION WITH THE DARK KNIGHT. YOU CAN ALSO HEAR HIM TRY TO SING ON "MIRANDA", A 1966 SINGLE RELEASE WEST WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE IN HIS NOTES THAT HE ONLY AGREED TO PERFORM WHEN HIS AGENT SHOWED A RECORDING CONTRACT AT HIM WHILE HIS TEMPERATURE HOVERED IN THE TRIPLE-DIGIT RANGE DUE TO THE FLU. PERHAPS THAT'S THE BEST STATE FOR THE LISTENER TO ENJOY IT IN AS WELL? BEYOND THAT, WE FIND WEST'S CRONIES, FRANK GORSHIN AND BURGESS MEREDITH, ASSUMING THEIR WELL-KNOWN PERSONAS FOR MUSICAL WORKOUTS AS THE RIDDLER AND THE PENGUIN--WITH GORSHIN'S Q AND A SHTICK SET TO MUSIC BY NO LESS A NOTED TUNESMITH THAN THE RECENTLY DEPARTED MELTORME!! QUIZZICALLY, NO OBITZ READ FOR THE VELVET FOG MENTIONED HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRINCE OF PUZZLERS? JAN AND DEAN--NOT CESAR ROMERO--PERFORM "THE JOKER IS WILD", BUT MORE ON THAT ANON. AS FOR BATMAN'S PARTNER, THE LINER NOTES DOCUMENT THE EXISTENCE OF A CURIO ENTITLED "BOY WONDER I LOVE YOU" BY TV'S ROBIN, BURT WARD, WHICH, AMAZINGLY, WAS COMPOSED BY FRANK ZAPPA, OF ALL PEOPLE--AND THEN FRUSTRATES OUR CURIOSITY BY REPORTING THAT IT WAS UNAVAILABLE FOR INCLUSION! HOLY RAISED--AND THEN DASHED--EXPECTATIONS!! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH A FEW SERVINGS OF TASTY SIXTIES SOUL, CAMP STYLE--MOST NOTABLY, LAVERN BAKER'S "BATMAN TO THE RESCUE", LOOSELY BASED ON HER OWN "JIM DANDY" (CHARTBUSTER--PLUS A PECULIAR PEGGY LEE ATTEMPT CALLED "THAT MAN", AND FOUR--COUNT 'EM, FOUR!--VERSIONS OF THAT DA-DA-DA-DA DITTY, THE BATMAN THEME: COMPOSER NEAL HEFTI'S 45 RPM RELEASE (NOT THE TV RECORDING), A JAZZY WORKOUT FROM RENOWNED TRUMPETER, AL HIRT, A 1993 ROCKED UP VERSION BY DAVID ALLEN AND THE ARROWS, AND AN ORCHESTRAL ARRANGEMENT THAT SUPLY WORKS SOME OF DANNY ELFMAN'S MORE GOTHIC MOVIE MELODY INTO THE MIX BY THE ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA (WHAT? THEM AGAIN?), SHOWCASING THE SONG'S DURABILITY ACROSS THE MUSICAL SPECTRUM. ASIDE FROM THIS BELOVED TUNE, THIS ISN'T MUSIC IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE--YOU HAVE ONLY TO HEAR WEST'S WARBLINGS ON "MIRANDA" TO REALIZE THAT--BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE SELECTION AMONG THE FIFTEEN INCLUDED THAT COULD BE CLASSIFIED AS AN OUT AND OUT COMEDY ROUTINE, AND THAT'S "BATMAN AND ROBIN IN THE CLIPPER CAPER" BY THE BROTHERS FOUR. AS COMEDY GOES, WELL, I'VE HEARD WORSE. WHICH, COINCIDENTALLY, LEADS ME TO MY NEXT DISC...

BECAUSE, IF I WANT PUERILE, INANE HUMOR, I SURE DON'T NEED JAN AND DEAN--NOT AS LONG AS I HAVE RHINO'S MAD GROOVES COLLECTION, CHOSEN FROM VARIOUS LPS AND FLEXI-DISCS OF LONG PAST, THIS IS (MOSTLY) GOOD PUERILE, INANE HUMOR: FIFTIES ROCK AND ROLL IS EFFECTIVELY--IF OBVIOUSLY--PARODIED ON TRACKS SUCH AS "SHE GOT A NOSE JOB" WHILE THE SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL MID-SIXTIES OFF-BROADWAY REVUE, "THE MAD SHOW" IS REPRESENTED BY, AMONG OTHERS, A SEND-UP OF "THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA" CALLED "THE BOY FROM...," WHICH IS NOT ONLY SUNG BY TV'S ALICE, LINDA LAVIN, BUT FEATURES LYRICS PENNED BY ONE ESTEBAN RIO NIDO, WHICH HAPPENS TO BE THE SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE ABRASHED AUTHOR'S REAL MONIKER: STEVEN SANDHEM! THREE SELECTIONS FROM A FULL LENGTH, TWO-SIDED 1980 FLEXI-DISC INCLUDED WITH A SIMILARLY TITLED SPECIALLY PREPARED MAGAZINE, "MAD DISCO", ARE PROBABLY TWO TOO MANY, BUT OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO COMICS FANS (THAT'S YOU) IS A SELECTION ORIGINALLY BOUND INTO A GIANT 1998 REPRINT COLLECTION ON A FLEXI-DISC, "MEET THE STAFF OF MAD". BASICALLY, IT CONSISTS OF EDITOR AL FELDSTEIN (IN REALITY, JERRY DEFUCCIO PLAYS THE ROLE, SUPPOSEDLY CHOSEN FOR HIS STRONGER VOCAL PROJECTION) THEATRICALY INTRODUCING THE LIKES OF BILL GAINES AND WALLY WOOD AS, ALL THE WHILE, A VOICE LAUGHS MANIACALLY IN THE BACKGROUND! AND THEN THERE'S "IT'S A GAS," A FIFTIES ROCK INSTRUMENTAL A LA "TEQUILA", WITH A DIFFERENCE! Y'SEE, EACH TIME SAX LEGEND KING CURTIS TAKES A BREAK FROM HIS SOLD, A SERIES OF OUTRAGEOUS BELCHES PUNCTUATES THE MUSIC: THINKING MY EIGHT YEAR OLD DAUGHTER, JULIE, MIGHT FIND THIS TRACK AMUSING, I PLAYED IT FOR HER AND HER FRIENDS, CHRISTINA AND ELIZABETH. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE WHAT KIDS THAT AGE WILL FIND FUNNY, BECAUSE AS MUCH AS THEY LIKED IT THE FIRST TIME, THANKS TO THAT OTHER MARQUEL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY, THE REPEAT BUTTON, THEY FOUND IT JUST AS FUNNY THE THIRTYFOURTH TIME!! REALLY!! OJ, THAT'LL TEACH ME...

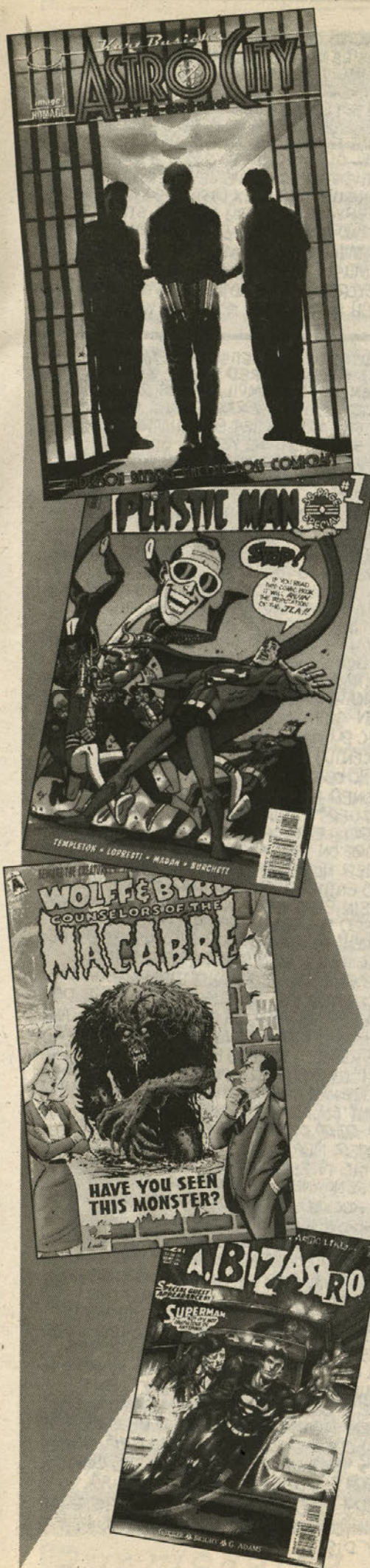
Dateline: ♪♫#0

BY FRED HEMBECK



SUPERMAN THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION
VARESE SARABANDE VSD-5998 • 1999
JOHN WILLIAMS SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE JOHN DEBNEY ROYAL SCOTTISH ORCH.
VARESE SARABANDE FILM CLASSICS V622-5981 • 1998
COMMAND PERFORMANCE: LIVE IN PERSON/JAN & DEAN MEET BATMAN
ONE WAY RECORDS 521-18687 • 1996
BATMANIA SONGS INSPIRED BY THE BATMAN TV SERIES
VARESE SARABANDE VSD-6821 • 1997
MAD GROOVES--KID RHINO: RD T2435 1996

I'M NOT GONNA KID YOU--THESE ARE PRIMARILY NOVELTY RECORDS, THEY'RE MOOD MUSIC IN THE SENSE THAT YOU'VE GOTTA BE IN THE MOOD TO LISTEN TO 'EM! OUTSIDE OF THE SUPERMAN RECORDINGS, YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET MUCH MUSICAL PLEASURE FROM THEM, BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY THE POINT. IF YOU'RE ANY SORT OF SUPERMAN, BATMAN, OR MAD MAGAZINE FAN, CONSIDER THESE AS HISTORICAL ADJUNCTS IN ANOTHER MEDIA, AND THUS, MUST-HAVE ITEMS. BUT IF YOU HAVE A PRE-TEEN, BE CAREFUL WITH "IT'S A GAS"--YOU MAY HEAR IT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOOD!



(POV from Page 62)



I also like Kurt Busiek's *Astro City*. Ty Templeton's recent *Plastic Man Special*, Dan Jurgens and John Romita Jr. on *Thor*, and a lot of what's been seen in the Superman and Batman comics that

are based on the TV animation style, my own contributions excepted. Oh, yeah — and I just read the first issue of Steve Gerber's *A. Bizarro* and liked it.

I've always enjoyed Batton Lash's *Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre*: fun stories, fun characters, fun pictures. As of #24, it will change its title to *Supernatural Law*. It will still be one of the freshest things offered today in funnybook format.

Reprints

I also really like every single book that DC and Marvel have put out lately featuring reprints of classic, older comics.

Oh, one can quarrel with the reproduction work in some. In a couple of cases wherein old work has been "reconstructed," the art styles of the reconstructors are a bit too evident. You might not know this unless you laid the reprint alongside the original, which few are likely to do, but, often, the retouching stands out like Vlade Divac at a Munchkin reunion. The other day, I spoke with a Golden Age artist who's not happy with what is being represented as "his" work.

One might also get sticker-shock at what most reprint volumes cost, and this ties in with the above quarrel. To do a better job would raise the prices even higher and that would make them sell fewer copies, which would mean they'd have to charge even more for them, which would make them sell even fewer copies, which would mean ...

You see the pattern.

I wish the reproduction were more faithful and I wish the prices were lower. Still, the market for vintage reprints is about as soft as the demand for a sequel to that Ralph Fiennes *Avengers* movie. So those of us who yearn to see better and more diversified reissues can only be thankful for what we're getting. Maybe if these thrive, we'll see resurrections of things like *Sugar & Spike*, *Bat Lash*, and some non-super Marvel esoterica. (I once heard someone at Marvel describe that kind of thing as, "... a frequent request of those who are on the comp list — but of no one who will have to pay.")

Actually, I suspect the future of comic-book reprints will be almost wholly on CD-ROM or other means of digital delivery. But if that's the case, I hope we'll still see neat items like the fancy boxed thingie that DC has issued under the name *The Superman Masterpiece Edition*. It consists of three components, any of

Those of us who yearn to see better and more diversified reissues can only be thankful for what we're getting.

which might be worth the price (around \$65) all by its lonesome ...

Component #1: A near-exact reprint of *Superman* #1 from 1940. Yes, this material's been reprinted before, but I think this is the first time you could hold in your paws a highly reasonable facsimile of the actual comic book in the same size it was originally issued. It somehow feels right in this format — and the only way it could have been better would be if they'd printed it on crummier paper.

Component #2: A splendid hardcover book on the history of Superman, featuring stories, ads, promotional goodies, and other oddments.

Component #3: A neat little statue — about 8 inches high — that simulates a 1940s Superman statuette. The worst thing about this is having to decide whether to display it proudly or keep it safely in its little cubicle in the box. I'm opting for storing it, assuming I can figure out where to store the box.

If your local comic-book shop *doesn't* stock this — or is all out — check out the WB Store near you, and I also saw a nice display of them last night in a Virgin Megastore.

And by the way: One hopeful sign for the funnybook business is that the latter chain seems to be carrying more and more graphic novels and such. But don't we fans have a bad enough image without having to buy our comics at something called a Virgin Megastore?

Magazines

I'm running outta room but I have to recommend a couple of publications that are doing oodles to chronicle comic-book history before it all slips away from us. John and Pamela Morrow are directly or indirectly responsible for three or four of them.

They are hands-on active in editing 'n' publishing *The Jack Kirby Collector*, which is a must-have for anyone with even the slightest interest in its subject. There is so much to be said about Kirby, and, each issue, John and a phalanx of learned Kirby korrespondents manage a

rich selection of interviews, well-researched articles, and analyses.

The Jack Kirby Collector is so popular that issues tend to go outta print — but don't fret. Because once a run of them becomes unavailable, the Morrrows issue them in book form with bountiful extras. The third collection is just coming out and the first two are available. All are clearly labors of love and are highly recommended, as is the recent *Jack Kirby Checklist* from the same labor-of-loving folks.

Jon B. Cooke edits and the Morrrows merely publish *Comic Book Artist*, which is crammed full (minor criticism: too crammed) with info on other comics, mainly those of the late-'60s and early-'70s. Last issue was bulging with info on Warren Publishing and the ones before serviced Marvel and DC, as will upcoming numbers. Again, if you have the slightest interest in the area covered, you owe it to yourself to try an issue.

Earlier comics get the spotlight in the Morrow-published *Alter Ego*, edited by my old pal Roy Thomas. Same deal.

Roy and his friends are digging up hitherto-lost info on comics that should not (make that *cannot*) be forgotten. You'll love it, if you care at all about the Golden and/or Silver Ages of comics — which we all do, even if we can't agree precisely when they started and stopped.

The Morrrows have nothing to do with it and it's a bit less fancy — but I suggest you also grab up a new fanzine from my chum Bob Brodsky. (You can tell it's a fanzine, because Bob will probably lose his shirt, pants, and Haneswear on it.) It's called *The O'Neil Observer* and the first issue is just out.

The O'Neil it observes is Denny, one of our more prolific and gifted comic-book writers. And, while the whole thing could easily have been devoted to his exciting career, Denny has modestly asked that the spotlight shine on other writers, as well — so about two-thirds of the magazine is devoted to folks like Steve Englehart, Elliot Maggin, and even Yours Truly.

Bob isn't printing a lot of these, so you might want to hustle to grab yours. The first one is available by sending just four 33¢ stamps to Bob Brodsky, 8455 Fountain Ave., #611, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

OK, I got through my obligatory review column, and that didn't hurt much, did it? Next week in this column, look for our annual harangue about the Golden and Silver Age panels at Comic-Con International in San Diego.

For now, I'll just remind you that Mark Evanier gets his mail at PMB 303, 363 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036-3124, and on the 'net at me@evanier.com. Someday, I may do another review column and I am highly susceptible to bribery and free stuff. Hint, hint.



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Edited by Don Thompson and Dick Lupoff

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by Dick Lupoff & Don Thompson, editors

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by Don Thompson & Dick Lupoff, editors

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SUN
AUG 8

Born on this date:
Janice Cohen (1952)
Sheldon Inkol (1965)

MON
AUG 9

Born on this date:
Rick Leonardi
Bob McLeod
Fred Fredericks (1929) 70 years ago
Mark Braun (1954) 45 years ago
Lou Manna (1954) 45 years ago
Steve Gallacci (1955)
Steve Moncuse (1957)

TUES
AUG 10

Born on this date:
Clint McElroy (1955)
Christie "Max" Scheele (1957)
Mike Leonard (1972)

WED
AUG 11

CBG #1345 ships — featuring the lost fantasy worlds of Robert E. Howard as they appear in comic books. We'll take a look at Howard comics from the past and the future.

Born on this date:
Letitia Glozer (1961)
Pat Brosseau (1964) 35 years ago
Jim Lee (1964) 35 years ago
Shelley Braga (1969) 30 years ago

THURS
AUG 12

Comic-Con International begins in San Diego, Calif. See Calendar Notes.

Born on this date:
Eleanor J. Barnes (1958)
Rusty Haller (1964) 35 years ago

FRI
AUG 13

Born on this date:
Selby Kelly (1917)
Jim Mooney (1919) 80 years ago
Donna Barr (1952)
Rob Davis (1954) 45 years ago
Robin Ator (1954) 45 years ago
Bret Blevins (1960)
Shannon Wheeler (1966)

SAT
AUG 14

Born on this date:
Jon "Bean" Hastings
John Costanza (1943)
Ken Holecwzynski (1959) 40 years ago
Lawrence D. Hubbard (1960)
Tracy Hampton (1961)
Bill Nichols (1961)
Nabile P. Hage (1965)

Publishers

To see your comics listed here, please supply the exact shipping date for each title as soon as possible, preferably at least one month ahead of time. Send the information to: Maggie Thompson, CBG Calendar, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990. The same goes for any other announcements, additions, and corrections.

CBG Calendar Notes

Shows listed are multiple-day, non-mall-show events with the primary focus on comic books. Further information about these and other shows, as well as creator appearances, can be found each week in the **CBG** features *What, Where, and When* and *Now Appearing*.

• **Comic-Con International**, Aug. 12-15 at the San Diego Convention Center. Guests include: Paul Dini, Will Eisner, Mark Evanier, June Foray, Neil Gaiman, Mike Mignola, Art Spiegelman, Jim Starlin, Jim

Steranko, Dave Stevens, Jill Thompson, and Barry Windsor-Smith. Hours: Thursday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Four-day admission: \$60/adults; \$30/children (ages 7-16) and seniors (60 and up). Single-day ticket prices to be announced. Info: (619) 544-9555.

Continuing This Week

• **Cartoon Art Museum**, 814 Mission St., San Francisco, CA. Call for updates on current exhibits: (415) CAR-TOON.

• **International Museum of Cartoon Art**, 201 Plaza Real, Boca Raton, FL 33432. Call for updates on current exhibits: (561) 391-2200. **Current exhibit:** *Tarzan from Foster to Disney*, through Sept. 19. Tarzan art by Hogarth, Foster, Manning, and other tal-

ents who have worked on *Tarzan* strips and comic books.

• **Krazy Kat Comes Home: The Cartoon Art of George Herriman**, an exhibit of comic-strip art by George Herriman, including watercolor illustrations, Sunday pages, and storyboards, on display through Aug. 29 at the Sedona Arts Center, Hwy 89A and Art Barn Rd., Sedona, AZ.

• **60 Years of The Batman**, an exhibit of original art by Jim Aparo, Norm Breyfogle, Mark Buckingham, Mike Collins, Bryan Talbot, and others will run through the summer at American Dream Gallery, 72 Walcot St., Bath, United Kingdom. Info: 01225 424881.

New comics scheduled to ship this week

The following information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at press time. Check with your local retailer to find out what day new comics go on the shelves. Comics that are delayed or rescheduled will be tracked in future **CBG** Calendars.

Note: * indicates a rescheduled comic book that appeared in a previous **CBG** Calendar.

Archie Comics Publications

Betty #78, \$1.79
Pals 'n' Gals Double Digest #44, \$2.99
Sabrina the Teenage Witch #30, \$1.79

Caliber

* Sherlock Holmes Reader #2, \$3.95 (May)

Dark Horse

Dylan Dog #6 (of 6), \$4.95
Heart of Empire: The Legacy of Luther Arkwright #5 (of 9), \$3.50

Hellboy: Box Full of Evil #1 (of 2), \$2.95
Masakazu Katsura's Shadow Lady: Eyes of a Stranger (4 of 5) #11, \$2.50
Sin City: Hell & Back #2 (of 9), \$2.95
Star Wars: Bounty Hunters: Aurra Sing, \$2.95
Usagi Yojimbo: Grasscutter TPB, \$16.95

DC Comics

A. Bizarro #4 (of 4), \$2.50
Action Comics #758, \$1.99
Aquaman #60, \$1.99
Azrael: Agent of the Bat #57, \$2.25
Batman: Fortunate Son (hardcover), \$24.95
Batman: Harley Quinn, \$5.95
Batman: Shadow of the Bat #90, \$1.99
Books of Magic #65, \$2.50
Catwoman: Guardian of Gotham #1 (of 2), \$5.95
Congo Bill #1 (of 4), \$2.95
Green Lantern #117, \$1.99
Hourman #7, \$2.50

Impulse #53, \$2.25
JLA: Foreign Bodies, \$5.95
League of Extraordinary Gentlemen #4 (of 6), \$2.95
Legends of the DC Universe #21, \$1.99
Legionnaires #76, \$2.50
Nightwing #36, \$1.99
Scooby-Doo #27, \$1.99
Speed Racer #1 (of 3), \$2.50
Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E. #3, \$2.50
Superman Adventures #36, \$1.99
Superman Annual #11, \$2.95
Top Ten #2, \$2.95
Transmetropolitan #26, \$2.50
Yeah! #1, \$2.95

Highwater Books

* Cave In, \$12.95 (May)

Image Comics

Darkness Collected Ed. #5, \$5.95
* Detectives, Inc.: A Terror of Dying Dreams TPB, \$19.95 (May)
Fathom Collected Ed. #2, \$5.95

Nash #1, \$2.50
* Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #23, \$2.95 (May)
* Zorro's Renegades II: Lady Rawhide TPB, \$14.95 (Jan)

Marvel Comics

Amazing Spider-Man #10, \$1.99
Bishop: The Last X-Man #1, \$2.99
Black Panther #11, \$2.50
Captain America 1999, \$3.50
Generation X #56, \$1.99
Iron Man #21, \$1.99
Mutant X #13, \$1.99
Silver Surfer: Loftier than Mortals #1 (of 2), \$2.50
Spider-Girl #13, \$1.99
Warlock #1, #2 (two covers), \$1.99
X-Men: True Friends #2 (of 3), \$2.99

Penny Farthing Press

Victorian #6, \$2.95

Shipping notes and updates

• **Confirmed shipping:** We have received confirmation that the following titles have shipped and should be available in stores. This reflects shipping information received through July 23.

Abstract: Strangers in Paradise Vol. III #25, \$2.75 (Jul)
ACG: Cop Called Tracy #8, \$2.95 (Aug)
Dick Tracy: Crimebuster #7, \$2.95 (Aug)
First Trip to the Moon Museum Ed. #1, \$2.95 (Aug)
Lonely War of Willie Schultz #2, \$2.95 (Aug)

Amaze Ink/Slave Labor: Dim-Witted Darryl #5, \$2.95 (Jun)

Oddjob #2, \$2.95 (Jun)

Antarctic: World War II: 1946 #1, \$2.50 (Jul)

Arcane: Prophecy of the Soul Sorcerer #2 (of 4), \$2.95 (Jun)

Archie: Archie & Friends #37, \$1.79 (Jul. 18-24)

Betty & Veronica #140, \$1.79 (Jul. 18-24)

Jughead's Double Digest #62, \$2.99 (Jul. 18-24)

Laugh Digest #152, \$1.99 (Jul. 18-24)

Sonic the Hedgehog #75, \$1.79 (Jul. 18-24)

Arrow: Dr. Goyle Special #1, \$2.95 (Jul)

Spank the Monkey #1, \$2.95 (Jun)

Avatar: Dreamwalker: Summer Rain #1, \$3 (Jul)

Pandora/Razor #1, \$3.50 (nude ed., \$6) (Jul)

Threshold #17 (three covers), \$4.95 (nude ed., \$6) (Jun)

Widow X #3, \$3.95 (nude ed., \$6) (Jul)

Blind Wolf: Yahg: The Craynobi Tales, \$3.95 (Jun)

Blue Corn: Peace Party #1, \$2.95 (Jul)

CPM Manga: Dark Manga #2, \$2.95 (Jun)

Slayers Book One: Medieval Mayhem, \$15.95 (Jun)

Urotsukidōji: Legend of the Overfiend #12, \$2.95 (Jun)

Dark Horse: Bob Burden's Original Mysterymen #1, \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

Dark Horse Presents #145, \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

Gunsmith Cats: Bean Bandit #7 (of 9), \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

Heart of Empire: The Legacy of Luther Arkwright #4 (of 9), \$2.95 (Jul. 11-17)

Mystery Men #1 (of 2), \$2.95 (Aug. 1-7)

Nathan Never #5 (of 6), \$4.95 (Jul. 18-24)
Star Wars Handbook: #2 Crimson Empire, \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

Usagi Yojimbo #30, \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

DC: Animaniacs Featuring Pinky and the Brain #52, \$1.99 (Jul. 18-24)

Aquaman Annual #5, \$2.95 (Jul. 18-24)

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Galactus the Devourer #1 (of 6), \$3.50 (Jul. 18-24)

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Viz: Animerica Extra Vol. 2 #8, \$4.95 (Jul. 18-24)

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Maison Ikkoku Part 9 #4 (of 10), \$3.25 (Jul. 18-24)

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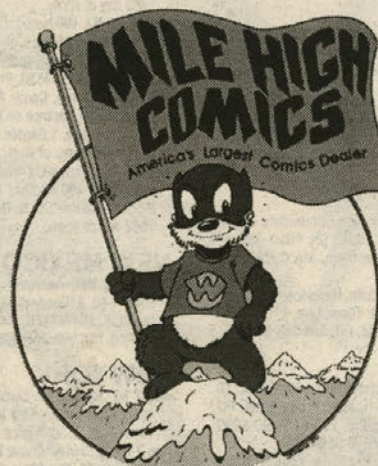
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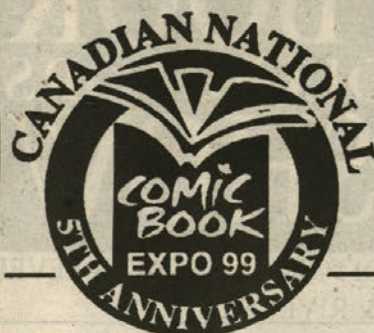
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23 1st Red Sonja	NM	\$ 28
24 Red Sonja	NM	\$ 15
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66, 94	VF/NM	\$ 10
91, 97	NM	\$ 12

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380	FN/VF	\$ 8
396	VF/NM	\$ 12
436	NM	\$ 10

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14 Sub-Mariner	GD/VG	\$ 40
18 Dr. Doom	VG	\$ 65
44 1st Gorgon	FN/VF	\$ 24
46 1st Black Bolt	FN/VF	\$ 32
54	FN	\$ 12
60, 61	VG/FN	\$ 9
65	VG	\$ 7
68	FN/VF	\$ 18
79	VF/NM	\$ 30
80	VF	\$ 18
83, 84	FN/VF	\$ 12
86 Dr. Doom	VF/NM	\$ 24
91	VF/NM	\$ 18
98	FN	\$ 5
105, 106, 111	NM	\$ 18
107	VF/NM	\$ 10
110	VF/NM	\$ 10
114	NM	\$ 15
115	NM	\$ 13
118, 119	NM	\$ 13
130, 132	NM	\$ 5
135, 146	NM	\$ 11
160	NM	\$ 11
161, 162, 164	NM	\$ 7

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108	GD/VG	\$ 30
131	FN/VF	\$ 38
146, 150	FN	\$ 8
Annual 1	FN/VF	\$ 125

GREEN LANTERN

26, 30, 31	VG	\$ 15
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54, 64, 71	VG/FN	\$ 5
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HULK

6	GD/VG	\$ 100
106	VF/NM	\$ 38
108	FN	\$ 9
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123	FN	\$ 4
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140	NM	\$ 18
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10 1st Felix Faust	VG/FN	\$ 45
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MARVEL SPOTLIGHT

2 1st Werewolf by Night	VF	\$ 55
3 2nd Werewolf by Night	NM	\$ 35
6 2nd Ghost Rider	NM	\$ 30
7, 8 Ghost Rider	NM	\$ 30
13, 14, 18 Son/Satan	NM	\$ 6

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27	NM	\$ 6
40 Spider-Man	NM	\$ 7
41, 42	NM	\$ 4
47, 62, 64, 72	NM	\$ 4

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60 2 nd Hawkkey VF/NM		\$ 9
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80 87 90 94	VF	\$ 2

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63, 64	FN/VF	\$ 38
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72, 76	VF	\$ 13
75	VF/NM	\$ 20
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145	VF/NM	\$ 20
148, 152	VF	\$ 12
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154-156	NM	\$ 40
156	FN	\$ 5
157, 174	VG/FN	\$ 4
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171, 172	VF	\$ 9
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21	VF	\$ 55
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26, 29	VF	\$ 55
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34, 36, 37	NM	\$ 75
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EVENTS

(From Page 46)

12noon-6pm, T: 30-8, F: \$90. for 1, \$170. for 2, A: free. Badgley Promotions. PO Box 3528, Parkersburg, WV 26103. PH: 304-485-8345.

MARYLAND

Aug 22 MD, Havre de Grace. Comic Books, Records, Toys, Beanie Babies, Sports Memorabilia & Collectible Show, Community Ctr. 100 Lagaret Ln., SH: 11am-4pm, T: 80, A: \$3. Diamondback Productions, PH: 410-526-4184.

Aug 29 MD, Laurel. Comic Book & Action Figure Show, Best Western-Maryland Inn. 15101 Sweetzer Ln. (Exit 33B off I-95 btw I-95 & Rt. 29), SH: 11am-4pm, T: 30, F: \$50, A: \$2.50, under 7 free. PH: 410-783-1157.

MASSACHUSETTS

Aug 15 MA, South Attleboro. Comic Book, Toys, Non-Sports Card & Collectible Show, K of C Hall, Rt. 123, take Rt. 123 W. SH: 10am-3pm, T: 59, A: \$3. Harry Martin, 936 South St., Wrentham, MA 02093. PH: 508-384-8791.

Aug 22 MA, Boston. Comic Book & Toy Spectacular, Radisson Hotel. Formerly Howard Johnson 57, 200 Stuart St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 120-8, F: \$85, A: \$5. Primate Promos., David Cummings, PH: 978-388-5550.

MICHIGAN

Aug 22 MI, Roseville. Comic Book & Toy Collectable Show, VFW Post. 10 & one half & Gratiot, SH: 9am-3pm, A: \$3. Classic Productions, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. Joseph Pellegrino, PH: 810-790-6290 eves. 775-3289 after 12noon or Marilyn, PH: 810-939-4205.

Aug 29 MI, Livonia. X-Travel Com Comic Book & Toy Show, Knights Of Columbus. 19801 Farmington Rd. (bet. 7 Mile & 8 Mile Rd.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 55-8, F: \$35. in advance, \$40. day of show, A: \$2. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. Ste. 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-9059.

MINNESOTA

Aug 21-22 MN, Duluth. Collector's Expo IV, Miller Hill Mall. 1600 Miller Trunk Hwy. #108, SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 40-8, F: \$80. for 1, \$130. for 2. Timothy Broman, 1600 Miller Trunk Hwy. #108, Duluth, MN 55811. PH: 218-726-1360.

NEBRASKA

Aug 15 NE, Omaha. Monthly Comic Books, Coins, Ballcards, NASCAR & Automobile Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn. Ford Hall, I-80 & 72nd St., T: 100, F: \$30, A: free. Ed Bishop, 2016 E. 19th, Fremont, NE 68025. PH: 402-721-7364.

NEW JERSEY

Aug 8 NJ, Elmwood Park. Comic Books, Sports Card & Collectibles Show,

American Legion Post 147, 1 Legion Place (off Market St.), SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50-6, A: \$1. Gary Sipos, 1 Garden Ct., N. Garfield, NJ 07026. PH: 973-340-2218 or 796-9717 day of show.

Aug 15 NJ, Garfield. Comic Books, Sports Card & Collectibles Show, Boys Club. 490 Midland Ave., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 70, A: \$1. Gary Sipos, 1 Garden Ct., N. Garfield, NJ 07026. PH: 973-340-2218 or 478-7662 day of show.

Aug 20-22 NJ, Wildwood. Comic Book, Sports Card & Toys Show, Conv. Ctr. On the boardwalk at Burk Ave., SH: Fri. 5pm-10pm, Sat. 12noon-10pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, A: free. EMCEE Conventions, PO Box 151, Hightstown, NJ 08520. PH: 609-448-7585.

Aug 22 NJ, Clifton. Comic Books, Sports Card & Collectibles Show. 802 Clifton Ave. (entrance on Collax Ave.), SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50-8, A: \$1. Gary Sipos, 1 Garden Ct., N. Garfield, NJ 07026. PH: 973-340-2218 or 779-9332 day of show.

Aug 29 NJ, Garfield. Comic Books, Sports Card & Collectibles Show, Boys Club. 490 Midland Ave., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 70, A: \$1. Gary Sipos, 1 Garden Ct., N. Garfield, NJ 07026. PH: 973-340-2218 or 478-7662 day of show.

NEW MEXICO

Aug 20-22 NM, Albuquerque. Bubonic 31 Show, Howard Johnson East. I-40 & Eubank NE. NMSF Conference, PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176. Craig Chrissinger, PH: 505-266-8905 or Greg Herring, PH: 505-266-9030.

NEW YORK

Aug 7 NY, Sayville-LI. Comic Book, Action Figures & Non-Sports Show, Atlas Mart Indoor Flea Market. 5750 Sunrise Hwy. & Broadway, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30, A: free. Paul, PH: 516-289-7398.

Aug 7-8 NY, Shirley. Comic Book, Card, Toy & Action Figure Beanie Show. 20 Floyd Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, F: \$20. for 1 day, \$30. for 2 days, A: free. Joe Fabianski, PH: 516-276-1871 or 281-9672 day of show.

Aug 8 NY, Brooklyn. Sun. Comic Book, Baseball Cards, Beanie Babies, Toys & Collectibles Show, Temple Hill of Flatlands, 2164 Ralph Ave. (at Ave L), SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50-8, F: \$40. for 1, \$75. for 2, A: free. Sunrise Prods., Scotty O'Donnell, PO Box 340625 Ryder Stn., Brooklyn, NY 11234. PH: 718-251-2075 or 241-6477.

Aug 13 NY, Brooklyn. Fri. Comic Book, Baseball Cards, Beanie Babies, Toys & Collectibles Show, St. Dominics Church. 20th Ave. at Bayridge Pky. (same as 75th St.), SH: 6pm-10pm, T: 50-9, F: \$40. for 1, \$75. for 2, A: free. Sunrise Prods., Scotty O'Donnell, PO Box 340625 Ryder Stn., Brooklyn, NY 11234. PH: 718-251-2075 or 241-6477.

Aug 14-15 NY, Shirley. Comic Book, Card, Toy & Action Figure Beanie Show. 20 Floyd Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, F: \$20. for 1 day, \$30. for 2 days, A: free. Joe Fabianski, PH: 516-276-1871 or 281-9672 day of show.

Aug 15 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book, Sports Card & Beanie Babies Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pky. SH: 9am-4pm, T: 35-8, F: \$45, A: free. Mark Dillon, PH: 718-266-1625.

Aug 15 NY, Ozone Park. Comic Book, Sports Card, Coin & Beanie Baby Show & AUCTION, Jewish Ctr. 107-01 Crossbay Blvd., SH: 10am-4pm,

T: 36, F: \$37.50 for 1, \$65. for 2, A: \$1. Joseph Carvana, 114-32 150 Ave., S. Ozone Park, NY 11420. PH: 718-845-7240 or 848-1795.

Aug 21 NY, Sayville-LI. Comic Book, Action Figures & Non-Sports Show, Atlas Mart Indoor Flea Market. 5750 Sunrise Hwy. & Broadway, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30, A: free. Paul, PH: 516-289-7398.



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Doc Savage Science Det (Sept-Oct 48)
The Swinging Lady, last digest size
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Golden Man, VG but front cov mg \$5
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Featuring female protagonists: VG
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Publishing) fm \$4
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Phila.) coverless \$4
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7 g, box 1/3 spine slightly ragged \$10
19 g, cover det, spine almost cplly
split, long vert crease across
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werewolf story \$5
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COMIC RELIEF 13 issues, \$15. Funny Stuff 11 issues, \$15. George first 3 issues, \$10. Gerald Tilley, 2416 Delaware, Springfield, IL 62702. Postage not included.

1965 MUNSTERS FN, \$65. 1961 Spacemen #1 F/VF, \$110. 1958 TV Westerns #2 VG, \$35. 1960 Wildest Westerns #5 G/VG, #6 VG, \$25 each. 618-398-2673.

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST 4/94, Hollywood at Home, Rare unpublished photos of Marilyn Monroe, Jean Harlow, plus over 20 stars, \$15 ppd. Cliff 303-424-8762 or seagem@mstg.net

SALE: FAMOUS monsters Filmland magazines #200, \$45; #202, #208, #210, \$12 each postpaid. All NM/M, \$70 all. Michael Wilczek, 33 Arlington Ave., Auburn, NY 13021.

PREMIER MAGAZINE May 99 Star Wars Episode I set of all four different, killer covers \$40 includes postage. Bill Yawien, 2625 Emmons Ave. #3-B, Brooklyn, NY 11235.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICS: "WWII" 1938-45, all 96 issues + 5 maps, VG-VF, \$350 + postage; 1946-60 VG-VF, 180 issues + many maps, \$250 + post. 1916-1937 available, too! Richard 916-568-7711.

DETAILS MAGAZINE, September 1993- August 1994. \$5 for all 12 issues. Mark Kuettner, 1001 Bay Shore Dr., #204, Oshkosh, WI 54901. e-mail: mkuett@hotmail.com

4451 MAGAZINES, WANTED

CREEM MAGAZINE circa 1982-1988, any condition. Matt Biswell, 1626 Rossi St., Boise, ID 83706-3354.

NATURALIST (NUDIST) material wanted. Buying non-airbrushed mags, books, etc. Send lists with issue number, year and conditions. S. Dowdy, 5120 North Spring, Roanoke, VA 24019.

GIRLIE MAGAZINES wanted from the 1950s to mid-70s. Modern Man, Adam, Nudist, all titles considered. Send pricelist. Bill Megyery, 1733A North Larrabee, Chicago, IL 60614.

MIKE SHAYNE Mystery Magazine, February 1968, Harsh Mistress, Science Fiction magazine #1. Name your price! Bill Finocchiaro, 611 Kimball Ave., Fulton, NY 13069. 315-593-3454.

FILMFAX RECENT issues #69/70 (double issue) and #72. Hullinger, Box 108 RR#6, Decatur, IL 62521-8826.

WANTED: CONAN mags. in high grade. Buy or trade. John Snyder, 120 E. Franklin St., Hamilton, NJ 08610. e-mail: madzombi@gateway.net

COMIC BOOK Marketplace wanted in Good condition 1-28, 32-38, 40-44, 51. L. Florio 157 E. Church St., Bergenfield, NJ 07621-1831. Send list.

ESCAPADE 1964 with story orphans with clay feet by Jack Dowland. Don Walsh, 323 Buchanan St., Alexandria, VA 22314-2105. 703-548-5742.

ADAM JAN. 1981, Juggs June 1981, Gent Feb. 1982 are the adult magazines I need. Delmo Walters, 939 Woodycrest Avenue, #416, Bronx, NY 10452.

DELL SCREEN stories, March 1969, "Wrecking Crew" cover. Also, Skin Diver Jan. 1966, Thunderball cover. Delmo Walters, 939 Woodycrest Avenue, #416, Bronx, NY 10452.

SCARY MONSTERS 4, 5, 14 and up wanted. Gary Banks, 1406 Wisteria St SE, Cullman, AL 35055.

4452 SCIENCE FICTION, FOR SALE

STAR WARS Marvel comics NM-Mint #1 \$29.50, #1-107, Ann/KingSize 1-3, Movie #1, ROTJ 1-4, all bagged, \$779.50. 254-634-4902. David Curtis, 1806 Sycamore, Killeen, TX 76543.

SET 4 V stickers, \$2 ppd. 3 Buck Rogers publicity slides, \$7.50 ppd. more SF available. Cynthia Case, 11324 Knollridge Ct., #3, Indianapolis, IN 46229.

4453 SCIENCE FICTION, WANTED

READABLE COPY February 1999 issue Fantasy and Science Fiction must have Peter David's story Archtype that David said would be the last Super Man story if it was published in a comic. Zerox, fax, typed or any form readable ok. 916-444-9231. Glenn Hakanson, 2830 I #E, Sacramento, CA 95816.

4453 SCIENCE FICTION, WANTED

GENE RODDENBERRY'S Genesis II. Want VHS of 1973 TV movie. Copy of teleplay, related reviews, clippings, whatever! Mike 818-782-9476 or mvscreen@aol.com

4600 REPRINTS, FOR SALE

GREATEST 50's Batman and Superman reprints, \$25 postpaid. Batman: Dark Knight Returns; Frank Miller and Marvels TPB, both \$25 postpaid. James 770-428-8288.

4601 REPRINTS, WANTED

MODESTY BLAISE: Comics Revues #1, Titan Books 4-8. Twin Earths 9-12, Sundays 6-7. Mint only. Do these exist? Steve K, 2068 E. 8th, Brooklyn, NY 11223-4129. 718-376-1245.

FLASH GORDON V1 HC Kitchen Sink also need Cadillacs & Dinosaurs S&N HC. 410-795-5510. Mike McKenzie, 6501 Chantilly, Sykesville, MD 21784. altworld@aol.com

4610 PORTFOLIOS/POSTERS FOR SALE

RODNEY MATTHEWS Terrestrial Voyages 1980 calendar, Huge 16", color, spiral bound, VFN+/NM. Best offer takes it! Brian Evans, 1237 2145 Drive, Eckert, CO 81418.

LADY DEATH S/N print, #187/1,000. 25"x36". Jensen & Hughes signatures, \$54 postpaid. Post Office M.O. Charles Reagle, 600 Eaglenook Way, Osprey, FL 34229. 941-966-6816. buymystuff@juno.com

4611 PORTFOLIOS/POSTERS WANTED

SUPERMAN POSTER produced by Thought Factory in the late 70s. I still need Batman poster, too. Delmo Walters, 939 Woodycrest Avenue, #416, Bronx, NY 10452.

PARAGON PRESS!! Need Heroes and Heavies, Drenched Damsels portfolios for index project. Help! Please! Gary Schlegelmilch, 4602 Kenwood Dr., Woodbridge, VA 22193. geschlegel@juno.com

4630 TRADING CARDS FOR SALE

BUFFY VAMPIRE Slayer Season One factory set \$14 ppd. 10 for \$110 ppd. Atlas, POB 25095, Overland Park, KS 66225. 913-345-1069.

SETS \$5 each: Savage, Dragon, Punisher, Youngblood, and Shadowhawk (all comic images) DC vs Marvel. Robert Sands, 65 Fox Chapel Dr., Orchard Park, NY 14127.

JACK DAVIS "You'll Die Laughing" card set, Mint, \$125. Also known as funny monsters. Jim Crane, 15 Clemson Ct., Newark, DE 19711. 302-738-6031.

50 DIFFERENT entertainment promo trading cards, \$20 postpaid. (US) Steve Tafuni, PO Box 43, Valrico, FL 33595. E-mail: sstcmx@aol.com

HOTSHOTS, HS7, HSGirls 2, 3, Dare to Bare, 3-Damsels, Hustler II, III, GPPC Pinup Photograph Tam, SASE. Louis Bosse, 1120 Aurora, Muskegon, MI 49442-5932.

1953 TOPPS Archives Baseball cards unopened box \$29.95, 1991 Classic Best Baseball unopened box \$9.95. Eagle Collectibles, 3338 Appel Rd., Bethel Park, PA 15102. 412-831-3989.

UNCUT SHEETS- 90 card. Parkinson, Sanjulian or White- \$24 each includes postage/ USA only. L. Abdulhadi, 25 NE 148th St., Miami, FL 33161. 305-940-2360.

POKEMON 24-GAME card demo pack from E3 show. Still sealed, very rare. Only \$12 postpaid. Serge Fidlon, 19221 Sherman Way, #21, Reseda, CA 91335.

POKEMON PIKACHU game card limited edition promo. Gold E3 imprinted on card. Super rare only \$9 postpaid. Serge Fidlon, 19221 Sherman Way, #21, Reseda, CA 91335.

STAR TREK cards- Paramount 1969. Complete set 1-55 VF \$1,000. E. Lynch, 3406 Brookshire Ct., Tampa, FL 33618. 813-968-0570.

SUPERMAN GUM cards Topps 1966 77 cards 58 different 19 duplicates all VG \$200. Jim Burke, 61 Parker St., Freehold, NJ 07728.

4631 TRADING CARDS WANTED

WACKY PACKAGES wanted. Will buy all original art work and uncut sheets, will also pay a finders fee for any information that results in a sale. Eric Roberts, 260 Atherton Ave., Atherton, CA 94027. 650-327-6570 or 650-326-8708.

WANTED: CONAN 1988 series cards. Will buy or trade. Charles Johnson, Gibbon, MN 55335.

SUPERHERO, WRESTLING trading cards cut off toy packages (example WWF "Bend'ums"). Write: Charles Kline, PO Box 791, Cleveland, MS 38732-0791.

CHARLIE'S ANGELS- need someone to trade singles, one for one. Let's complete sets. Gerald Tilley, 2416 Delaware, Springfield, IL 62702.

WANTED: SOUPY Sales, Topps, 1965, cards 8, 22, 33, 36. Partridge Family II, green card 2A. Edward Moriarty, PO Box 4595, Oakbrook, IL 60522-4595.

SOLITAIRE ACE of spades! gfritz@sgi.net

4631 TRADING CARDS WANTED

FOOTBALL CARDS to trade. Wanted Detroit Lions. Have Stars, rookies, chase cards, autos: Dave Ridgion, 205 Eastern, Greenville, MI 48838. 616-754-7395.

WOULD LIKE to trade 10 of my promos for 10 of yours. Need Spider-Girl #0. Tom Vanko, 1527 Somerset, Munster, IN 46321.

WWF CARDS (1998) #3, 5, 27, 56. Also WCW/NWO (1998) #7, 38, and 72. Troy Hickman, 3200-A South 9th St., Lafayette, IN 47905. Thanks!

CREATURE FEATURE (1980) #40; Wacky Packages: Band-Ache & Regal Clown; Odder Odd Rods #1; any Oddest; GPK 3rd, #90A. Jeff Mirrone, Box 2212, Hollister, CA 95024.

WILL TRADE My Voyager autographed set A1-A20 for your STOSIII A61 and STDS9 A19 Autographed cards. 254-634-4902. David Curtis, 1806 Sycamore, Killeen, TX 76543.

WANTED! COMPLETE set of Xena Series One and Series Two trading cards. Mint condition please. Thank you. Bryan Frazier, 1520 Nettleship, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

TOPPS DON Mattlingly baseball cards regular issue from 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994. Total is four cards, near Mint to Mint. Bob 718-967-7363.

STAR QUEST box of boosters wanted cheap. Dave Ridgion, 205 Eastern Ave., Greenville, MI 48838. 616-754-7395.

4660 MISCELLANEOUS, FOR SALE

SPORTS CARDS & memorabilia collectors: Buy and sell with the biggest and best collectors in the world. Place your classified ad in Sports Collectors Digest. 40,000 weekly readers. The hobby's oldest, most respected magazine. We are the "bible" of the industry. Bonus: Your classified ad also goes up on the Internet at no additional charge! Call today: 800-942-0673.

ELVIS PRESLEY "Love Me Tender" 2" X 3" enameled metal/glass mirror. Original Mint condition, dated 1956, \$12 postpaid. John Travalini, 217 New Road, Wilmington, DE 19805.

MICKEY MOUSE 50th birthday 1-1/4" pinback button "Happy Birthday Mickey 1928-1978". Original Mint condition, \$7 postpaid. John Travalini, 217 New Road, Wilmington, DE 19805.

PROTECT YOURSELF. Police quality pepper spray stops attackers cold. No permanent injury. Keychain size. Only \$4.95 postpaid. John Travalini, 217 New Rd., Wilmington, DE 19805.

THESE SHOWS for trade: Scream Queen Movies, Jetman, Changeman, Metalder, Fireman, Sun Vulcan, Inazuman, Transformers, and Bioman. Rob Newcomer, 717 Church St., Anderson, IN 46013.

METEORITES OWN a piece of another world, authenticity guaranteed. See photos at: <http://www.meteoriteweb.com>

1963 "SUPERMAN" Steve Allen 8x10 B&W inscribed. 1961 Alley Awards original hand-carved redwood trophy model. SASE. Foss, HCR 3, Box 40, Birchtree, MO 65438.

STEVE CANYON Magazine #1-12 NM. Kitchen Sink Press, \$65 postpaid. Don Faruolo, 15 Fairmont Terr., West Orange, NJ 07052. 973-325-3169.

KINGDOM COME cards in sealed box, History of DC Universe hardcover signed and numbered. Call Steve evenings 613-231-5342 or leave message at 819-956-3542.

STAR WARS Han Solo send-away \$75 ppd. Wide Vision Convention Promo P6 rare \$55 ppd. C.M. Taylor, 6708 Parsons Blvd., 6B, Flushing, NY 11365.

PRINCESS MONONOKE. Japanese anime masterpiece! Letterboxed & subtitled!!! \$20 CK/ money order to: Jim Watnem, 5361 Eastway #4, Greendale, WI 53129.

GENE RODDENBERRY'S Genesis III! Want VHS of 1973 TV movie, copy of teleplay, related reviews, clippings, whatever! Mike 818-782-9476 or mvscreen@aol.com

VAMPIRELLA STATUE: 25th Anniversary statue for \$175. Ray 914-747-5874 or E-mail: rayfan4@aol.com

BARB WIRE laser disc, unrated version, 18+ only, \$20 postpaid. Steven Ng, 4966 Hyde Park Drive, Fremont, CA 94538. 510-656-7157. stevenang@juno.com

SPIDER-MAN LIMITED watch, MIB \$75. Flash statue \$150. Model kits: Concrete \$150, Mask \$250, Vampirella \$400. Joey Buttafucio 1st print signed Joey B \$30. 516-679-2642 Evenings.

STAR TREK Hallmark ornaments, first Enterprise 1991 \$300. 1991 thru 1994 \$400. 1st Hallmark Barbie Doll "Victorian Skater" \$45. Others available. 516-679-2642 evenings EST.

4660 MISCELLANEOUS, FOR SALE

ALMA-TADEMA AUTOGRAPH. \$50. Terry 215-627-7258.

"DOODLES BY D.B." Best of #3. Send \$1 + 2 stamps and a signed age statement to: David B., PO Box 1243, Stafford, VA 22555.

"DOODLES BY D.B." Best of #3. Send \$1 + 2 stamps and a signed age statement to: David B., PO Box 1243, Stafford, VA 22555.

SPIDER-MAN 1978 Marvel calendar, NM; real nice, \$22 ppd. Chris 518-695-4247 before 10pm EST. Thanks and thanks CBG!

MYSTERY IN Space Anthology. S.C. Fireside Press. 1980. NM condition. \$75 postpaid. Don Faruolo, 15 Fairmount Terr., West Orange, NJ 07052. 973-325-3169.

MOVIE SCRIPTS \$18, TV Scripts \$15; over 14,000 titles to choose from! Free shipping inside USA. Visit our web site at: <http://www.MadMorgan.com> to view catalog or contact: Mad Morgan Enterprises, PO Box 6698, Burbank, CA 91510. 818-848-1445; FAX: 818-840-1252.

JENNIFER LOPEZ large vinyl promotional banner for 1997 "Selena" movie. Scarce 3'x5' Budweiser full-color hanging banner, unused, \$50. Doug, 112 Chimney Rock, Victoria, TX 77904-1114.

SANDMAN, HIGHLANDER posters for sale. Sci-fi magazines: Omni, Analogy, Asimov, F&SF, Time-Life Science books. Lorraine, PO Box 5121, Manchester, NH 03108. SASE or hasshin@tiac.net

4661 MISCELLANEOUS, WANTED

WANTED: TOYBIZ 10" Marvel figures, projector figures, Deluxe Spiderman, Mary Jane, Wolverine, Ghost Rider collector series. Hal Reed, 320 Parkshore Dr., Columbia, SC 29223.

CIGARETTE COUPONS wanted. Everything except Phillip Morris products. Paying 7% face. Unexpired only. For prompt payment, send to: John Travalini, 217 New Road, Wilmington, DE 19805.

SEEKING COPY of "Clueless" episode in which Stacy Dash pulls on a rubber band. Lou Sullo, 3000 Bronx Park East #17B, Bronx, NY 10467.

WANTED: MOVIE posters from Mad Monster Party, either version. 618-692-9302. Gary Johannmeier, 3 Country Maples, Glen Carbon, IL 62034. garyjoh@iw.edupub.com

DEEP SPACE Nine series finale on VHS. Will pay handsomely! Tony Midyett, 6832 Schroeder, Madison, WI 53711.

LAY'S/ DORITOS "Can't Resist" Star Wars large cards 6, 9. I can't eat any more chips. Don Walsh, 323 Buchanan, Alexandria, VA 22314-2105. 703-548-5742.

DIRTY MARY Crazy Larry VHS wanted. Gary Banks, 1406 Wisteria St SE, Cullman, AL 35055.

NEED LAND OF Lost, Bugaloos taped from Sat. morning TV Land. Trading comics, toys, other material. Cynthia Case, 11324 Knollridge Ct., #3, Indianapolis, IN 46229.

PLAYBOY PUZZLES, Adult Card Collection quarterly #1, singles of Hotshots, Lady Death Mega clear, Julie strain Marilyn 2000. Louis Bosse, 1120 Aurora, Muskegon, Mich. 49442-5932.

HOT WHEELS cars and accessories from the 1960s and 1970s. I'll buy one car to whatever. Dig through those closets and call me! Gene 281-347-0648.

1970'S ERA Johnson Smith catalog, near Mint, and vintage "Heroes World" catalogs, NM. Will pay up to \$5. Lee Solomon, 2839 Marlbank, Sterling Hts., MI 48310.

4700 NOVELTIES, TOYS, GAMES FOR SALE

MODEL KITS: Plastic, resin and vinyl. From and of comics, Sci-Fi, TV, movies, space, figures, etc. Old and new, hundreds available. Free sales catalog, we also buy and trade. JF Green Models, Dept. CBG, PO Box 55787, Riverside, CA 92517. 909-684-5300, 800-807-4759, Fax 909-684-8819, e-mail: cbg@greenmodels.com website: <http://www.greenmodels.com>

STALLONE OVER The Top 20" figure. NRFB, \$50 check or MO. John Graham, 11334 Hwy 19W, Loris, SC 29569. \$90 value according to White's Guide.

FIREBALL, KING Kong, Untouchables, Disneyland, Zorro, Hamilton Invaders. Hundreds of toy playset instructions photocopies. LSASE illustrated catalog. Buff Smith, 1344 West Flower, Phoenix, AZ 85013.

4700 NOVELTIES, TOYS, GAMES FOR SALE

VINTAGE PAPERDOLL books for sale. Celebrity, Comic book, magazine, uncut and cut. Send LSASE for list #4. Janice Hanks, 116 School St, Littleton, NH 03561.

DAWN STATUE, \$150 delivered. Free Dawn #1 with every order. 208-687-3924 or kevin@thecomicbox.com <http://www.thecomicbox.com>

"SUPER POWERS" (loose) Mint Superman, Hawkman, Joker, Mantis, Steppenwolf, \$25 each. Secret Wars (loose) Mint, Kang, Dr. Doom, Baron Zemo, Magneto, \$10 each. Jim 562-949-1422.

AIR ASSAULT on Crete plus Malta, 1942: Avalon Hill, used. Rules inscribed by designer, \$25. \$5 P&H. Gernert, SHV, 2110 Payne St., Louisville, KY 40206.

BEATLES REMCO Dolls for trade for Golden Age comics. Mary, 650 South Rancho Santa Fe Rd. #27, San Marcos, CA 92069-3945. 760-599-4339.

KREISS CERAMIC Man with big smile (hairline crack), \$25, Kreiss dog with hair and bell, Exc., \$15, Kreiss Beatnik ashtray Used, \$10. Postage extra. Terry 215-627-7258.

SHOGUN WARRIOR Halloween costume, 1977. Bit box wear O/W Mint, \$25, Alien3 Halloween costume, 1994, bit package wear O/W Mint, \$20. Postage extra. Terry 215-627-7258.

NASCAR ACTION figures MOC racing champions 1991 Ken Schrader or Sterling Marlin \$11 each postpaid. Multiples available. Patrick Horgan, Box 158, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569.

WEDGE ANTILLES and Biggs Darklighter two pack, \$70 or best offer + \$5 shipping and handling. Rick's, PO Box 1026, Crescent, OK 73028. 405-969-3858 for more.

GHOST RIDER, Dr. Strange enamel pins on card. 2 Batman, Robin milk glass mugs, other toys. Cynthia Case, 11324 Knollridge Ct., #3, Indianapolis, IN 46229.

JACKIE GLEASON Giant Stage Set, 1955, has Honey Moons props, dolls, etc. Mint cond., \$300. Steve Berdy, 159 Sherman Ave., Newark, NJ 14513. 315-331-6618.

BEANIE BABIES, Princess, Erin, Curly, Wise, Valentino, \$20 each or \$90 for all. Glory \$40, Fortune \$15. Pat Butler, 3791 Wildcat Run, Lakeland, FL 33810.

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More than 7,000 photo-illustrated entries from 350 different characters including

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4701 NOVELTIES, TOYS, GAMES WANTED

THREE STOOGES PVC figures (circa. 1990), also Larry hand puppet (1960s). Karl Wilcox, 628 Morningdale Dr, Chester, SC 29706.

SUPERMAN WANTED! Look for my booth at the San Diego Comic Con. August 12-15. See you there! superdf62@aol.com Danny Fuchs, 209-80 18th Ave., Bayside, NY 11360.

WORLD'S GREATEST MEGO collector seeking MEGO's for collection. Needing heroes, Titans, Alter-Ego, Apes, Trek, TV/ Movie, accessories, boxes, etc. Buy, sell, trade! Chris carly@semo.net

Springs, CO 80829) is a quarterly anthology attempting to fill in, on high-quality white paper, neglected periods of comics history.

The latest issue (#29) contains generous helpings of *Captain Easy* (by Roy Crane's successor Leslie Turner, 1944), *Terry and the Pirates* (by Milton Caniff's successor George Wunder, 1951), *Dick Tracy* (by series creator Chester Gould, from the underrated year of 1970), and *Windy and Paddles*

4701 NOVELTIES, TOYS, GAMES WANTED

SHERI LEWIS "Lambchop" toys, figures, coloring books, inexpensive items only. Also "Powerpuff Girls". Write: Charles Kline, PO Box 791, Cleveland, MS 38732-0791.

TESTOR WIERD Ohs model kits, send list to Denis Schwendemann, 108 Roy St., B-23, Seattle, WA 98109.

SUPERMAN WANTED! Batman* wanted! Wonder Woman wanted! I buy all interesting DC character collectible. Write today! email: superdf62@aol.com Danny Fuchs, 209-80 18th Avenue, Bayside, NY 11360.

4720 VIDEO GAMES FOR SALE

JAPANIMATION VIDEOS! 40 different A.D.V. promo copies, most still in shrinkwrap. 3/\$10 or AU for \$1 postpaid. Guido, #1 Screamer Dr., Clayton, GA 30525. 706-782-3318.

4800 FANZINES, FOR SALE

COMICS BUYER'S Guides back issues #17 to #1220. NM condition. List sent with SASE. \$650 includes shipping. Bobb Lynes, PO Box 561, South Pasadena, CA 91031.

MYSTERYMEN'S CREATOR'S 1st published work! Visions #1-3, Flaming Carrot #1, \$300 ppd! MO! FC#1 is Killian Barracks. Jaxon, 3425 E. Chandler Blvd., #224, Phoenix, AZ 85044.

4801 FANZINES, WANTED

CONTEMPORARY PICTORIAL Literature (CPL) #'s 6 & 7 wanted. Early 70s fanzine. Dave, 1166A West Middle Tpke., Manchester, CT 06040.

4900 NEWSPAPER STRIPS, FOR SALE

PICK OUT dates. Daily and Sunday. Great Selection. 1895 to 1998. Send your wantlist and SASE to: Gordon Campbell, 1124 Brookmeade Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

STAR WARS! 3/11/79 to 8/6/79 minus 3 strips, Mint, \$10 shipping. MO! \$300! Jaxon, 3425 E. Chandler Blvd. 224, Phoenix, AZ 85044. \$2 per day.

DOONESBURY SUNDAY strips for sale. 1972 to present. \$10 each year, \$200 all. Robert Farney, PO Box 341071, Milwaukee, WI 53234. 414-596-4627. rfarney@execpc.com

KERRY DRAKE 26 1955-1/3, \$39. Dick Tracy 42 1964-1/2, \$35. Many more. Donald Puff, 500 Walton Dr., Cheektowaga, NY 14225. 716-834-0996.

ASBURY PARK Sundays: VG Paper Tarzan, Val, Annie Halves and lots more. 10 Cpl. sections from mid 1980s, \$12. Claude Held, Box 515, Buffalo, NY 14225.

DONALD DUCK Sunday Halves: 1953 18, \$18. 1982 14, \$6. 1984 31, \$12. 1988 36, \$14. 1990 21, \$8. Claude Held, Box 515, Buffalo, NY 14225.

DOONESBURY SUNDAY Thirds: 1972 41, \$10. 1973 39, \$10. 1976 37, \$7.50. 1978 48, \$10. 1979 51, \$10. Claude Held, Box 515, Buffalo, NY 14225.

MENOMONEE FALLS Gazette 41-98, 126-232. Singles \$2 each; doubles \$4 each. Priority mail, insurance extra. Inquire 716-882-2875. Donald Whyte, 46 Greenwood Place, Buffalo, NY 14213.

4901 NEWSPAPER STRIPS, WANTED

BUYING COLLECTIONS Phone/ Fax 510-666-0732. Starland Strips, 1563 Solano PMB #155, Berkeley, CA 94707-2116.

ALLEY OOP Dailies 1962-1965. Good Xeroxes acceptable. Have 1943, 1946, 1950 dailies for trade if desired. Ken Fritsch, 54425 North Ave., Macomb, MI 48042.

SUPERMAN AND Batman Sundays and Dailies wanted. David Barsalou, 12 Main St., Chicopee, MA 01013. e-mail: barsaloud@sps.springfield.ma.us

4902 VIDEOS FOR SALE

TV SHOWS and cartoon's Anime and Asian videos for sale. Send wantlist. The Funnies Farm, 1A Ward St., Suffern, NY 10901. e-mail: msgr4289@aol.com

(by the late *Gasoline Alley* cartoonist Dick Moores, 1939).

Send \$10 to SPEC Productions for a sample copy.

I'll spread out on the floor with *The Missing Years* as soon as I figure out why Maggie Thompson suddenly became more willing to discuss my idea of following up the *But I Digress* book with *The Complete Dan T's Inferno*.

Uh oh ...



Ours is a hobby in which the words "The Complete ..." can be the kiss of death for a

fledgling reprint series, a hobby in which the successors of legendary cartoonists are often treated like dirt. (I can't take seriously the embittered critic who said a certain cartoonist didn't have "one-billionth" the talent of his predecessor.)

How fortunate it is that a magazine such as *The Missing Years* exists!

The Missing Years (published by JAL Publications and printed and distributed by SPEC Productions, P.O. Box 32, Manitou

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Tues. Aug. 10, 1999	1346	Sept. 3, 1999	Mon. Aug. 30, 1999	1349	Sept. 24, 1999
Tues. Aug. 17, 1999	1347	Sept. 10, 1999	Tues. Sept. 7, 1999	1350	Oct. 1, 1999

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Regular Trader

(Cost per ad per issue: ads must run consecutively to earn contract discounts. Limit 6 Trader spaces per page per advertiser.)

1 Issue	6 Issues	13 Issues	26 Issues	52 Issues
\$43.00	\$42.00	\$41.00	\$40.00	\$36.00

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C. RETAILER DIRECTORY \$3.50 per issue

Leads fans to your cash register! List your store name, address, phone number and 15 words of description. Sold in 26 and 52 week increments. It's targeted more to the comics buff than the yellow pages - and it's more cost effective. If you sell COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE in your store, we will publish your listing in bold face type at no extra charge.



This is the all-reviews issue, so I'm told.
Let's review life.



Goodwin. *Batman: Gotham Adventures #13* is about Archie Goodwin. And, if you don't realize that (and you probably can't until the end), the story makes very little sense. As I say, the tip-off comes on the last page, so you are obliged to go back and read the whole thing again — at least one more time — to see what you might have missed the first time through. It seems to be about two sets of thieves bent on stealing three vials of plague serum. But it's really about storytellers and how their stories go on forever.

The cover is a homage to Harvey Kurtzman's first cover for the *Mad* comic book (and it's so nicely done you should have this for the cover alone). And the child who comes to take Archie away is — well, it's not Alfred E. Neuman. Or, even, the famed Melvin. Someone not steeped in comics history and lore will probably miss most of this. I probably have, too. But I wouldn't miss owning this issue.

It seems only appropriate. The things that writers produce (sometimes with the aid of artists, sometimes solo) are supposed to be representations of life. They're wildly idealized, of course. A world where super-heroes try to right wrongs, and villains scheme to no avail. Or a place where story threads interweave, and there is a coherent whole that sometimes you can't see while you're in the midst of it, but — once you've stepped back a bit — then the previously tangled skein makes all kinds of sense. And then the story ends, and ideally the boy and girl wind up together (or good triumphs), and, in any event, everyone lives happily ever after.

But these are representations, as noted. One step removed from life. A copy of a copy, and, as is always the case with copies in succession, each one bears fainter resemblance to the one before.

Life.

When I was working at Marvel in the direct sales department, I did a lot of traveling.

It wasn't easy on the family I was leaving behind, as I jetted off to this place, that place, and the other place. People would tell me how exciting it must be for me to gallivant about the country, to see different and exciting cities. Thing is, for the most part all I ever saw were warehouses and comic-book stores. You'd be amazed how much a warehouse in California looks like a warehouse in Wisconsin which looks like a warehouse in Atlanta.

During that traveling, naturally, I left my family behind. Myra was never happy about it, and I swore to her that I would make it up to her thus: I would rack up sufficient frequent-flyer mileage to enable us, one day, to obtain two free first-class round-trip tickets to Hawaii. It was our dream. It took me quite a few years. But I kept my word. By the time I finally managed to do it, we had three children and our home, I had my writing career going, she had a degree in teaching — we had achieved our goals. And we sat there on the beach in Hawaii, watching the sun-

set, the waves lapping at our feet, thinking about how nice it would be to perhaps retire there one day. And we lived happily ever after. Fade out. The end.

Except after that it all began to crack and fall apart. Poised to have it all, we wound up with nothing. We had no happy ending. Instead, we got to have a splintered family and vicious arguments and the almost methodical destruction of everything that we had spent years building together and court battles and our lives reduced to cursory descriptions in legal papers, boiling an adult lifetime of striving down to a few terse sentences.

The notices came in, the final reviews on our marriage a colossal thumbs down. "We thought it would run forever, but obviously it just didn't have the legs." "The cast couldn't sustain the energy required to make the show stand up." "It strives for originality, but ultimately it's a lot of the same old songs."

Our show closed. We were undone by life, which — in its twists and turns — had dragged us off our charted course of happy ever after.

Life.

I watched TV as a child and saw the images of John Kennedy Jr. saluting his father, the image that has been pasted on newspapers in recent days. The thing I mostly remember about that time, aside from that picture, was that all the grown-ups were crying. I'd never seen grown-ups cry before. Grown-ups weren't supposed to, at least to the best of my knowledge. When you were a child, you cried. That was OK, that was to be expected. But, once you were an adult, you left behind aspects of childhood — and crying was one of them.

But there were adults crying. My grade school teacher, upon hearing the news, looked as if she was fighting back tears. That alone scared me. At home, my mom and dad — my mom especially, with her eyes red. I could see that she'd been crying. Tears, showing fright — these weren't the things that grown-ups were supposed to do. They were towers of strength. They were the ones who assured you that the thunder and lightning couldn't hurt you or that the creatures under your bed were simply products of your imagination. They were the editors of life. They were in control of it, guided it, shaped it.

A review of reality

They were whom you looked to for support. They were the center of life.

The reviews came in on the performances of the adults. "Did not rise to the occasion." "Overly sentimental."

As for the incident that provoked the outpouring of utterly unadult behavior: "Contrived." "Out of left field." "Overly violent." "What was this supposed to prove? That no one — not even the most powerful man in the country — is safe from the homicidal intentions of assassin(s)? What is the point in that?" Indeed — what is the point?

Life. Coming up short, not looking particularly positive. Thus far it would seem to rate two stars, maybe a two and a half at most.

A princess. Now that's a classic. You can't go wrong with that story. A young woman meets a prince, they get married, live happily ever after. There's a story for you. Nice. Simple. Elegant. Nothing fancy. Unadorned and straightforward, impossible for even the most inept author to botch. Unless, of course, the author is the Almighty, who seems to be omnipotent, omniscient, all-knowing, and all-powerful, but inept at telling a story that comes out right. For the princess and the prince, why — they can't sustain the union. Under the glare of the press, the deterioration is played out on a world stage. The marriage splits apart. Oh, but wait — the princess appears to have bounced back. She may get to be happy at last. The story turned out not to be about happily ever after, but, instead, the story of how one can achieve all one's dreams, lose them, but recover, and still live a fulfilling life. Well, that's not bad. Not bad at all.

Oh. Wait. Her car gets smashed up. And the princess (with two others) dies.

Life. The reviews come pouring in: "Senseless." "Idiotic." "A total waste." "Stupid." A comic book with those sorts of notices doesn't make it six issues. A play with those reviews puts up closing notices by the weekend. A one-hour TV drama? Forget it. By the time you get to the station break you're going to hear, "*The Princess Hour* has been canceled. We now return to *Jake and the Fatman*, already in progress."

Life. Don't talk to me about life. Thus spake Marvin the Paranoid android, who certainly knew what he was about. As the old saying goes, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get

you.

JFK Junior. John-John. First act of his life? The golden child loses his father, setting into motion the second act of his life. He grows up into the most eligible bachelor in America.

Third act: He meets and marries Carolyn. Perhaps this is the third act of her life, as well. Every woman in the country who had her own little "But if he met me he'd know we'd be perfect for each other" mantra going on in her head, why — they envy Carolyn above all others. She marries John Jr., the only son of the Camelot legacy. They would give anything to be her.

Bet that's changed. Bet there's a collective sighing of relief by all the women who might have snared the opportunity, and the bachelor, for their own. And the point is — the point of the story, why that's, uh ...

"The only way this story makes any sense," one review must say, "is if it is to serve as an instructional film for would-be pilots to emphasize why pilots who aren't instrument-savvy shouldn't take off at nightfall — a hazy nightfall, just to make it a bit more difficult."

"What purpose is served by this calamity?" another review would say. "Yet another Kennedy dies; it's becoming a cliché. Aren't there any original families in Washington?" "The father dies young and, 35 years later, the son dies young? The details of the story change, but the basic refrain remains the same."

Life. Can't be quantified or qualified.

It defies rational thought. It laughs in the face of formula. Unlike fiction, it cannot be deciphered or predicted based solely on what's gone before. It makes no sense. It's unfortunate, it's asinine, it's onerous.

Thumbs down on life. Well, yes — I suppose that's what they call "suicide." Long-term answer to a short-term problem.

What to expect from life, then? It's abysmal fiction. It follows no rules, takes characters out of the story with no warning and no point. People act out of character. Good people do bad things.

William Goldman, in the final analysis, said it best: "No one ever said life is fair. It's just fairer than death, that's all."

Peter David, writer of stuff, can be written to at *To Be Continued Inc.*, P.O. Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705.

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9⁹⁹

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45⁰⁰

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29⁹⁵

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14⁹⁵

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RANDY BOWEN'S BIONICA FIGURE

A Specialty Market Exclusive! The first-ever toy from master sculptor, Randy Bowen! The figure boasts 12 points of articulation, a secret button that lights up her LED eyes, bio-domes that glow in the dark, plus a bonus frog alien buddy – straight from Bowen's cult classic Dark Horse series, Decapitator! Figure stands approximately 8.5" tall.

14⁹⁹ Ea.

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28⁹⁹

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